JAMES BOYD
SOUTHERN PINES, N. C.

ROOM LR SECTION B SHELF 2

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENTED BY

James Boyd

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00038949273

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

BOOK CARD

Please keep this card in book pocket

TITLE

PARTIAL TITLE

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

ENDOWED BY THE
DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC
SOCIETIES

PR5210
.E95
v.10

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/workssimpletonwh10read

Twenty-one of these walks did she take

Original Etching

PR5
.E95
V.10
Re

Illustrated Library Edition

A SIMPLETON

WHITE LIES

BY

CHARLES READE, D. C. L.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
COLONIAL PRESS COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A SIMPLETON

PAGE

TWENTY-ONE OF THESE WALKS DID SHE TAKE . *Frontispiece*

"SO IT IS A LADY THIS TIME" 65

LAID HER GENTLY ON THE FLOOR, AND KNEELED OVER HER 195

NOT TILL HE WAS WITHIN FIVE YARDS DID HE FIRE . 362

WHITE LIES

ROSE . . . FASTENED ON THE EPAULETS 157

IT WAS COLONEL RAYNAL 294

WHAT HE WROTE RAN THUS,— 356

711904

823
R285
v.10

PREFACE.

It has lately been objected to me, in studiously courteous terms of course, that I borrow from other books, and am a plagiarist. To this I reply that I borrow facts from every accessible source, and am not a plagiarist. The plagiarist is one who borrows from a homogeneous work: for such a man borrows not ideas only, but their treatment. He who borrows only from heterogeneous works is not a plagiarist. All fiction, worth a button, is founded on facts; and it does not matter one straw whether the facts are taken from personal experience, hearsay, or printed books; only those books must not be works of fiction.

Ask your common sense why a man writes better fiction at forty than he can at twenty. It is simply because he has gathered more facts from each of these three sources, — experience, hearsay, print.

To those who have science enough to appreciate the above distinction, I am very willing to admit that in all my tales I use a vast deal of heterogeneous material, which in a life of study I have gathered from men, journals, blue-books, histories, biographies, law reports, etc. And if I could, I would gladly specify all the

various printed sources to which I am indebted. But my memory is not equal to such a feat. I can only say that I rarely write a novel without milking about two hundred heterogeneous cows into my pail, and that "A Simpleton" is no exception to my general method; that method is the true method, and the best, and if on that method I do not write prime novels, it is the fault of the man, and not of the method.

I give the following particulars as an illustration of my method:

In "A Simpleton," the whole business of the girl spitting blood, the surgeon ascribing it to the liver, the consultation, the final solution of the mystery, is a matter of personal experience accurately recorded. But the rest of the medical truths, both fact and argument, are all from medical books far too numerous to specify. This includes the strange fluctuations of memory in a man recovering his reason by degrees. The behavior of the doctor's first two patients I had from a surgeon's daughter in Pimlico. The servant-girl and her box; the purple-faced, pig-faced Beak and his justice, are personal experience. The business of house-renting, and the auction-room, is also personal experience.

In the nautical business I had the assistance of two practical seamen: my brother, William Barrington Reade, and Commander Charles Edward Reade, R.N.

In the South African business I gleaned from Mr. Day's recent handbooks; the old handbooks; Galton's "Vacation Tourist;" "Philip Mavor; or, Life among the Caffres;" "Fossor;" "Notes on the Cape of Good Hope," 1821; "Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and

Caffre-land," 1827; Bowler's "South African Sketches;" "A Campaign in South Africa," Lucas; "Five Years in Caffre-land," Mrs. Ward; etc., etc., etc. But my principal obligation on this head is to Mr. Boyle, the author of some admirable letters to the *Daily Telegraph*, which he afterwards reprinted in a delightful volume. Mr. Boyle has a painter's eye, and a writer's pen, and if the African scenes in "A Simpleton" please my readers, I hope they will go to the fountain-head, where they will find many more.

As to the plot and characters, they are invented.

The title, "A Simpleton," is not quite new. There is a French play called *La Niaise*. But *La Niaise* is in reality a woman of rare intelligence, who is taken for a simpleton by a lot of conceited fools, and the play runs on their blunders, and her unpretending wisdom. That is a very fine plot, which I recommend to our female novelists. My aim in these pages has been much humbler, and is, I hope, too clear to need explanation.

CHARLES READE.

A SIMPLETON.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG lady sat pricking a framed canvas in the drawing-room of Kent Villa, a mile from Gravesend; she was making, at a cost of time and tinted wool, a chair cover, admirably unfit to be sat upon — except by some severe artist, bent on obliterating discordant colors. To do her justice, her mind was not in her work; for she rustled softly with restlessness as she sat, and she rose three times in twenty minutes, and went to the window. Thence she looked down, over a trim flowery lawn, and long, sloping meadows, on to the silver Thames, alive with steamboats ploughing, white sails bellying, and great ships carrying to and fro the treasures of the globe. From this fair landscape and epitome of commerce she retired each time with listless disdain; she was waiting for somebody.

Yet she was one of those whom few men care to keep waiting. Rosa Lusignan was a dark but dazzling beauty, with coal-black hair, and glorious dark eyes, that seemed to beam with soul all day long; her eyebrows, black, straightish, and rather thick, would have been majestic and too severe, had the other features followed suit; but her black brows were succeeded by long silky lashes, a sweet oval face, two pouting lips studded with ivory, and

an exquisite chin, as feeble as any man could desire in the partner of his bosom. Person — straight, elastic, and rather tall. Mind — nineteen. Accomplishments — numerous; a poor French scholar, a worse German, a worse English, an admirable dancer, an inaccurate musician, a good rider, a bad draughtswoman, a bad hairdresser, at the mercy of her maid; a hot theologian, knowing nothing, a sorry accountant, no housekeeper, no seamstress, a fair embroideress, a capital geographer, and no cook.

Collectively, viz., mind and body, the girl we kneel to.

This ornamental member of society now glanced at the clock once more, and then glided to the window for the fourth time. She peeped at the side a good while, with superfluous slyness or shyness, and presently she drew back, blushing crimson; then she peeped again, still more furtively; then retired softly to her frame, and, for the first time, set to work in earnest. As she plied her harpoon, smiling now, the large and vivid blush, that had suffused her face and throat, turned from carnation to rose, and melted away slowly, but perceptibly, and ever so sweetly; and somebody knocked at the street door.

The blow seemed to drive her deeper into her work. She leaned over it, graceful as a willow, and so absorbed, she could not even see the door of the room open and Dr. Staines come in.

All the better: her not perceiving that slight addition to her furniture gives me a moment to describe him.

A young man, five feet eleven inches high, very square shouldered and deep chested, but so symmetrical, and light in his movements, that his size hardly struck one at first. He was smooth shaved, all but a short, thick, auburn whisker; his hair was brown. His features no more then comely: the brow full, the eyes wide apart

and deep-seated, the lips rather thin, but expressive, the chin solid and square. It was a face of power, and capable of harshness; but relieved by an eye of unusual color, between hazel and gray, and wonderfully tender. In complexion he could not compare with Rosa; his cheek was clear, but pale; for few young men had studied night and day so constantly. Though but twenty-eight years of age, he was literally a learned physician; deep in hospital practice; deep in books; especially deep in German science, too often neglected or skimmed by English physicians. He had delivered a course of lectures at a learned university with general applause.

As my reader has divined, Rosa was preparing the comedy of a cool reception; but looking up, she saw his pale cheek tinted with a lover's beautiful joy at the bare sight of her, and his soft eye so divine with love, that she had not the heart to chill him. She gave him her hand kindly, and smiled brightly on him instead of remonstrating. She lost nothing by it, for the very first thing he did was to excuse himself eagerly. "I am behind time: the fact is, just as I was mounting my horse, a poor man came to the gate to consult me. He had a terrible disorder I have sometimes succeeded in arresting — I attack the cause instead of the symptoms, which is the old practice — and so that detained me. You forgive me?"

"Of course. Poor man! — only you said you wanted to see papa, and he always goes out at two."

When she had been betrayed into saying this, she drew in suddenly, and blushed with a pretty consciousness.

"Then don't let me lose another minute," said the lover. "Have you prepared him for — for — what I am going to have the audacity to say?"

Rosa answered, with some hesitation, "I *must* have —

a little. When I refused Colonel Bright — you need not devour my hand quite — he is forty."

Her sentence ended, and away went the original topic, and grammatical sequence along with it. Christopher Staines recaptured them both. "Yes, dear, when you refused Colonel Bright" —

"Well, papa was astonished; for everybody says the colonel is a most eligible match. Don't you hate that expression? I do. Eligible!"

Christopher made due haste, and recaptured her. "Yes, love, your papa said" —

"I don't think I will tell you. He asked me was there anybody else; and of course I said 'No.'"

"Oh!"

"Oh, that is nothing; I had not time to make up my mind to tell the truth. I was taken by surprise; and you know one's first impulse is to fib — about *that*."

"But did you really deceive him?"

"No, I blushed; and he caught me; so he said, 'Come, now, there was.'"

"And you said, 'Yes, there is,' like a brave girl as you are."

"What, plump like that? No, I was frightened out of my wits, like a brave girl as I am not, and said I should never marry any one he could disapprove; and then — oh, then I believe I began to cry. Christopher, I'll tell you something; I find people leave off teasing you when you cry — gentlemen, I mean. Ladies go on all the more. So then dear papa kissed me, and told me I must not be imprudent, and throw myself away, that was all; and I promised him I never would. I said he would be sure to approve my choice; and he said he hoped so. And so he will."

Dr. Staines looked thoughtful, and said he hoped so too. "But now it comes to the point of asking him for such a treasure, I feel my deficiencies."

"Why, what deficiencies? You are young, and handsome, and good, and ever so much cleverer than other people. You have only to ask for me, and insist on having me. Come, dear, go and get it over." She added, mighty coolly, "There is nothing so *dreadful* as suspense."

"I'll go this minute," said he, and took a step towards the door; but he turned, and in a moment was at her knees. He took both her hands in his, and pressed them to his beating bosom, while his beautiful eyes poured love into hers point-blank. "May I tell him you love me? Oh, I know you cannot love me as I love you; but I may say you love me a little, may I not? — that will go farther with him than anything else. May I, Rosa, may I? — a little?"

His passion mastered her. She dropped her head sweetly on his shoulder, and murmured, "You know you may, my own. Who would not love you?"

He parted lingeringly from her, then marched away, bold with love and hope, to demand her hand in marriage.

Rosa leaned back in her chair, and quivered a little with new emotions. Christopher was right; she was not capable of loving like him; but still the actual contact of so strong a passion made her woman's nature vibrate. A dewy tear hung on the fringes of her long lashes, and she leaned back in her chair and fluttered awhile.

That emotion, almost new to her, soon yielded, in her girlish mind, to a complacent languor; and that, in its turn, to a soft reverie. So she was going to be married! To be mistress of a house; settle in London (*that* she had quite determined long ago); be able to go out into the streets all alone, to shop, or visit; have a gentleman all her own, whom she could put her finger on any moment and make him take her about, even to the

opera and the theatre; to give dinner-parties her own self, and even a little ball once in a way; to buy whatever dresses she thought proper, instead of being crippled by an allowance; have the legal right of speaking first in society, even to gentlemen rich in ideas but bad starters, instead of sitting mumchance and mock-modest; to be Mistress, instead of Miss — contemptible title; to be a woman, instead of a girl; and all this rational liberty, domestic power, and social dignity were to be obtained by merely wedding a dear fellow, who loved her, and was so nice; and the bright career to be ushered in with several delights, each of them dear to a girl's very soul: presents from all her friends; as many beautiful new dresses as if she was changing her body or her hemisphere, instead of her name; *éclat;* going to church, which is a good English girl's theatre of display and temple of vanity, and there tasting delightful publicity and whispered admiration, in a heavenly long veil, which she could not wear even once if she remained single.

This bright variegated picture of holy wedlock, and its essential features, as revealed to young ladies by feminine tradition, though not enumerated in the Book of Common Prayer writ by grim males, so entranced her, that time flew by unheeded, and Christopher Staines came back from her father. His step was heavy; he looked pale, and deeply distressed; then stood like a statue, and did not come close to her, but cast a piteous look, and gasped out one word, that seemed almost to choke him, — "Refused!"

Miss Lusignan rose from her chair, and looked almost wildly at him with her great eyes. "Refused?" said she, faintly.

"Yes," said he, sadly. "Your father is a man of business; and he took a mere business view of our love:

he asked me directly what provision I could make for his daughter and her children. Well, I told him I had three thousand pounds in the Funds, and a good profession; and then I said I had youth, health, and love, boundless love, the love that can do, or suffer, the love that can conquer the world."

"Dear Christopher! And what *could* he say to all that?"

"He ignored it entirely. There! I'll give you his very words. He said, 'In that case, Dr. Staines, the simple question is, what does your profession bring you in per annum?'"

"Oh! There! I always hated arithmetic, and now I abominate it."

"Then I was obliged to confess I had scarcely received a hundred pounds in fees this year; but I told him the reason; this is such a small district, and all the ground occupied. London, I said, was my sphere."

"And so it is," said Rosa, eagerly; for this jumped with her own little designs. "Genius is wasted in the country. Besides, whenever anybody worth curing is ill down here, they always send to London for a doctor."

"I told him so, dearest," said the lover. "But he answered me directly, then I must set up in London, and as soon as my books showed an income to keep a wife, and servants, and children, and insure my life for five thousand pounds" —

"Oh, that is so like papa. He is director of an insurance company, so all the world must insure their lives."

"No, dear, he was quite right there: professional incomes are most precarious. Death spares neither young nor old, neither warm hearts nor cold. I should be no true physician if I could not see my own mortality." He hung his head and pondered a moment, then went on, sadly, "It all comes to this — until I have a profes-

sional income of eight hundred a year at least, he will not hear of our marrying; and the cruel thing is, he will not even consent to an engagement. But," said the rejected, with a look of sad anxiety, "you will wait for me without that, dear Rosa?"

She could give him that comfort, and she gave it him with loving earnestness. "Of course I will; and it shall not be very long. Whilst you are making your fortune, to please papa, I will keep fretting, and pouting, and crying, till he sends for you."

"Bless you, dearest! Stop!—not to make yourself ill! not for all the world." The lover and the physician spoke in turn.

He came, all gratitude, to her side, and they sat, hand in hand, comforting each other: indeed, parting was such sweet sorrow that they sat, handed, and very close to one another, till Mr. Lusignan, who thought five minutes quite enough for rational beings to take leave in, walked into the room and surprised them. At sight of his gray head and iron-gray eyebrows, Christopher Staines started up and looked confused; he thought some apology necessary, so he faltered out, "Forgive me, sir; it is a bitter parting to me, you may be sure."

Rosa's bosom heaved at these simple words. She flew to her father, and cried, "Oh, papa! papa! you were never cruel before;" and hid her burning face on his shoulder; and then burst out crying, partly for Christopher, partly because she was now ashamed of herself for having taken a young man's part so openly.

Mr. Lusignan looked sadly discomposed at this outburst: she had taken him by his weak point; he told her so. "Now, Rosa," said he, rather peevishly, "you know I hate — noise."

Rosa had actually forgotten that trait for a single moment; but, being reminded of it, she reduced her

sobs in the prettiest way, not to offend a tender parent who could not bear noise. Under this homely term, you must know, he included all scenes, disturbances, rumpuses, passions; and expected all men, women, and things in Kent Villa to go smoothly — or go elsewhere.

"Come, young people," said he, "don't make a disturbance. Where's the grievance? Have I said he shall never marry you? Have I forbidden him to correspond? or even to call, say twice a year. All I say is, no marriage, nor contract of marriage, until there is an income." Then he turned to Christopher. "Now if you can't make an income without her, how could you make one with her, weighed down by the load of expenses a wife entails? I know her better than you do; she is a good girl, but rather luxurious and self-indulgent. She is not cut out for a poor man's wife. And pray don't go and fancy that nobody loves my child but you. Mine is not so hot as yours, of course; but believe me, sir, it is less selfish. You would expose her to poverty and misery; but I say no; it is my duty to protect her from all chance of them; and, in doing it, I am as much your friend as hers, if you could but see it. Come, Dr. Staines, be a man, and see the world as it is. I have told you how to earn my daughter's hand and my esteem: you must gain both, or neither."

Dr. Staines was never quite deaf to reason: he now put his hand to his brow and said, with a sort of wonder and pitiful dismay, "My love for Rosa selfish! Sir, your words are bitter and hard." Then, after a struggle, and with rare and touching candor, "Ay, but so are bark and steel; yet they are good medicines." Then with a great glow in his heart and tears in his eyes, "My darling shall not be a poor man's wife, she who would adorn a coronet, ay, or a crown. Good-by, Rosa, for the present." He darted to her, and kissed her hand with

all his soul. "Oh, the sacrifice of leaving you," he faltered; "the very world is dark to me without you. Ah, well, I must earn the right to come again." He summoned all his manhood, and marched to the door. There he seemed to turn calmer all of a sudden, and said firmly, yet humbly, "I'll try and show you, sir, what love can do."

"And I'll show you what love can suffer," said Rosa, folding her beautiful arms superbly.

It was not in her to have shot such a bolt, except in imitation; yet how promptly the mimic thunder came, and how grand the beauty looked, with her dark brows, and flashing eyes, and folded arms! much grander and more inspired than poor Staines, who had only furnished the idea.

But between these two figures swelling with emotion, the representative of common sense, Lusignan *père*, stood cool and impassive; he shrugged his shoulders, and looked on both lovers as a couple of ranting novices he was saving from each other and almshouses.

For all that, when the lover had torn himself away, papa's composure was suddenly disturbed by a misgiving. He stepped hastily to the stairhead, and gave it vent. "Dr. Staines," said he, in a loud whisper (Staines was half way down the stairs: he stopped). "I trust to you as a gentleman, not to mention this; it will never transpire here. Whatever we do — no noise!"

CHAPTER II.

Rosa Lusignan set herself pining as she had promised; and she did it discreetly for so young a person. She was never peevish, but always sad and listless. By this means she did not anger her parent, but only made him feel she was unhappy, and the house she had hitherto brightened exceeding dismal.

By degrees this noiseless melancholy undermined the old gentleman, and he well-nigh tottered.

But one day, calling suddenly on a neighbor with six daughters, he heard peals of laughter, and found Rosa taking her full share of the senseless mirth. She pulled up short at sight of him, and colored high; but it was too late, for he launched a knowing look at her on the spot, and muttered something about seven foolish virgins.

He took the first opportunity, when they were alone, and told her he was glad to find she was only dismal at home.

But Rosa had prepared for him. "One can be loud without being gay at heart," said she, with a lofty, languid air. "I have not forgotten your last words to *him*. We were to hide our broken hearts from the world. I try to obey you, dear papa; but, if I had my way, I would never go into the world at all. I have but one desire now — to end my days in a convent."

"Please begin them first. A convent! Why, you'd turn it out of window. You are no more fit to be a nun than — a pauper."

Not having foreseen this facer, Rosa had nothing ready; so she received it with a sad, submissive, help-

less sigh, as who would say, "Hit me, papa: I have no friend now." So then he was sorry he had been so clever; and, indeed, there is one provoking thing about "a woman's weakness" — it is invincible.

The next minute, what should come but a long letter from Dr. Staines, detailing his endeavors to purchase a practice in London, and his ill-success. The letter spoke the language of love and hope; but the facts were discouraging; and, indeed, a touching sadness pierced through the veil of the brave words.

Rosa read it again and again, and cried over it before her father, to encourage him in his heartless behavior.

About ten days after this, something occurred that altered her mood.

She became grave and thoughtful, but no longer lugubrious. She seemed desirous to atone to her father for having disturbed his cheerfulness. She smiled affectionately on him, and often sat on a stool at his knee, and glided her hand into his.

He was not a little pleased, and said to himself, "She is coming round to common-sense."

Now, on the contrary, she was farther from it than ever.

At last he got the clew. One afternoon he met Mr. Wyman coming out of the villa. Mr. Wyman was the consulting surgeon of that part.

"What! anybody ill?" said Mr. Lusignan. "One of the servants?"

"No; it is Miss Lusignan."

"Why, what is the matter with her?"

Wyman hesitated. "Oh, nothing very alarming. Would you mind asking her?"

"Why?"

"The fact is, she requested me not to tell you: made me promise."

"And I insist upon your telling me."

"And I think you are quite right, sir, as her father. Well, she is troubled with a little spitting of blood."

Mr. Lusignan turned pale. "My child! spitting of blood! God forbid!"

"Oh, do not alarm yourself. It is nothing serious."

"Don't tell me!" said the father. "It is always serious. And she kept this from me!"

Masking his agitation for the time, he inquired how often it had occurred, this grave symptom.

"Three or four times this last month. But I may as well tell you at once: I have examined her carefully, and I do not think it is from the lungs."

"From the throat, then?"

"No; from the liver. Everything points to that organ as the seat of derangement: not that there is any lesion; only a tendency to congestion. I am treating her accordingly, and have no doubt of the result."

"Who is the ablest physician hereabouts?" asked Lusignan, abruptly.

"Dr. Snell, I think."

"Give me his address."

"I'll write to him, if you like, and appoint a consultation." He added, with vast but rather sudden alacrity, "It will be a great satisfaction to my own mind."

"Then send to him, if you please, and let him be here to-morrow morning; if not, I shall take her to London for advice at once."

On this understanding they parted, and Lusignan went at once to his daughter. "O my child!" said he, deeply distressed, "how could you hide this from me?"

"Hide what, papa?" said the girl, looking the picture of unconsciousness.

"That you have been spitting blood."

"Who told you that?" said she, sharply.

"Wyman. He is attending you."

Rosa colored with anger. "Chatterbox! He promised me faithfully not to."

"But why, in Heaven's name? What! would you trust this terrible thing to a stranger, and hide it from your poor father?"

"Yes," replied Rosa, quietly.

The old man would not scold her now; he only said, sadly, "I see how it is: because I will not let you marry poverty, you think I do not love you." And he sighed.

"O papa! the idea!" said Rosa. "Of course, I know you love me. It was not that, you dear, darling, foolish papa. There! if you must know, it was because I did not want you to be distressed. I thought I might get better with a little physic; and, if not, why, then I thought, 'Papa is an old man; la! I dare say I shall last his time;' and so, why should I poison your latter days with worrying about *me?*"

Mr. Lusignan stared at her, and his lip quivered; but he thought the trait hardly consistent with her superficial character. He could not help saying, half sadly, half bitterly, "Well, but of course you have told Dr. Staines."

Rosa opened her beautiful eyes, like two suns. "Of course I have done nothing of the sort. He has enough to trouble him, without that. Poor fellow! there he is, worrying and striving to make his fortune, and gain your esteem — 'they go together,' you know; you told him so." (Young cats will scratch when least expected.) "And for me to go and tell him I am in danger! Why, he would go wild. He would think of nothing but me and my health. He would never make his fortune: and so then, even when I am gone, he will never get a wife, because he has only got genius and goodness and three thousand pounds. No, papa, I have not told poor Chris-

topher. I may tease those I love. I have been teasing *you* this ever so long; but frighten them, and make them miserable? No!"

And here, thinking of the anguish that was perhaps in store for those she loved, she wanted to cry; it almost choked her not to. But she fought it bravely down: she reserved her tears for lighter occasions and less noble sentiments.

Her father held out his arms to her. She ran her footstool to him, and sat nestling to his heart.

"Please forgive me my misconduct. I have not been a dutiful daughter ever since you — but now I will. Kiss me, my own papa! There! Now we are as we always were."

Then she purred to him on every possible topic but the one that now filled his parental heart, and bade him good-night at last with a cheerful smile.

Wyman was exact, and ten minutes afterwards Dr. Snell drove up in a carriage and pair. He was intercepted in the hall by Wyman, and, after a few minutes' conversation, presented to Mr. Lusignan.

The father gave vent to his paternal anxiety in a few simple but touching words, and was proceeding to state the symptoms as he had gathered them from his daughter; but Dr. Snell interrupted him politely, and said he had heard the principal symptoms from Mr. Wyman. Then, turning to the latter, he said, "We had better proceed to examine the patient."

"Certainly," said Mr. Lusignan. "She is in the drawing-room;" and he led the way, and was about to enter the room, when Wyman informed him it was against etiquette for him to be present at the examination.

"Oh, very well!" said he. "Yes, I see the propriety of that. But oblige me by asking her if she has anything on her mind."

Dr. Snell bowed a lofty assent; for, to receive a hint from a layman was to confer a favor on him.

The men of science were closeted full half an hour with the patient. She was too beautiful to be slurred over, even by a busy doctor: he felt her pulse, looked at her tongue, and listened attentively to her lungs, to her heart, and to the organ suspected by Wyman. He left her at last with a kindly assurance that the case was perfectly curable.

At the door they were met by the anxious father, who came with throbbing heart, and asked the doctors' verdict.

He was coolly informed that could not be given until the consultation had taken place; the result of that consultation would be conveyed to him.

"And pray, why can't I be present at the consultation? The grounds on which two able men agree or disagree must be well worth listening to."

"No doubt," said Dr. Snell; "but," with a superior smile, "my dear sir, it is not the etiquette."

"Oh, very well," said Lusignan. But he muttered, "So, then, a father is nobody!"

And this unreasonable person retired to his study, miserable, and gave up the dining-room to the consultation.

They soon rejoined him.

Dr. Snell's opinion was communicated by Wyman. "I am happy to tell you that Dr. Snell agrees with me, entirely: the lungs are not affected, and the liver is congested, but not diseased."

"Is that so, Dr. Snell?" asked Lusignan, anxiously.

"It is so, sir." He added, "The treatment has been submitted to me, and I quite approve it."

He then asked for a pen and paper, and wrote a prescription. He assured Mr. Lusignan that the case had

no extraordinary feature, whatever; he was not to alarm himself. Dr. Snell then drove away, leaving the parent rather puzzled, but, on the whole, much comforted.

And here I must reveal an extraordinary circumstance.

Wyman's treatment was by drugs.

Dr. Snell's was by drugs.

Dr. Snell, as you have seen, entirely approved Wyman's treatment.

His own had nothing in common with it. The Arctic and Antarctic poles are not farther apart than was his prescription from the prescription he thoroughly approved.

Amiable science! In which complete diversity of practice did not interfere with perfect uniformity of opinion.

All this was kept from Dr. Staines, and he was entirely occupied in trying to get a position that might lead to fortune, and satisfy Mr. Lusignan. He called on every friend he had, to inquire where there was an opening. He walked miles and miles in the best quarters of London, looking for an opening; he let it be known in many quarters that he would give a good premium to any physician who was about to retire, and would introduce him to his patients.

No: he could hear of nothing.

Then, after a great struggle with himself, he called upon his uncle, Philip Staines, a retired M.D., to see if he would do anything for him. He left this to the last, for a very good reason: Dr. Philip was an irritable old bachelor, who had assisted most of his married relatives; but, finding no bottom to the well, had turned rusty and crusty, and now was apt to administer kicks instead of checks to all who were near and dear to him. However, Christopher was the old gentleman's favorite, and was now desperate; so he mustered courage, and went. He was graciously received — warmly, indeed. This gave him great hopes, and he told his tale.

The old bachelor sided with Mr. Lusignan. "What!" said he, "do you want to marry, and propagate pauperism? I thought you had more sense. Confound it all! I had just one nephew whose knock at my street-door did not make me tremble; he was a bachelor and a thinker, and came for a friendly chat; the rest are married men, highwaymen, who come to say, 'Stand and deliver;' and now even you want to join the giddy throng. Well, don't ask me to have any hand in it. You are a man of promise; and you might as well hang a millstone round your neck as a wife. Marriage is a greater mistake than ever now; the women dress more and manage worse. I met your cousin Jack the other day, and his wife with seventy pounds on her back; and next door to paupers. No; whilst you are a bachelor, like me, you are my favorite, and down in my will for a lump. Once marry, and you join the noble army of foot-pads, leeches, vultures, paupers, gone coons, and babblers about brats — and I disown you."

There was no hope from old Crusty. Christopher left him, snubbed and heart-sick. At last he met a sensible man, who made him see there was no short cut in that profession. He must be content to play the up-hill game; must settle in some good neighborhood; marry, if possible, since husbands and fathers of families prefer married physicians; and so be poor at thirty, comfortable at forty, and rich at fifty — perhaps.

Then Christopher came down to his lodgings at Gravesend, and was very unhappy; and after some days of misery, he wrote a letter to Rosa in a moment of impatience, despondency, and passion.

Rosa Lusignan got worse and worse. The slight but frequent hemorrhage was a drain upon her system, and weakened her visibly. She began to lose her rich complexion, and sometimes looked almost sallow; and a

slight circle showed itself under her eyes. These symptoms were unfavorable; nevertheless, Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman accepted them cheerfully, as fresh indications that nothing was affected but the liver; they multiplied and varied their prescriptions; the malady ignored those prescriptions, and went steadily on. Mr. Lusignan was terrified but helpless. Rosa resigned and reticent.

But it was not in human nature that a girl of this age could always and at all hours be mistress of herself. One evening in particular she stood before the glass in the drawing-room, and looked at herself a long time with horror. "Is that Rosa Lusignan?" said she, aloud; "it is her ghost."

A deep groan startled her. She turned; it was her father. She thought he was fast asleep; and so indeed he had been; but he was just awaking, and heard his daughter utter her real mind. It was a thunder-clap. "Oh, my child! what shall I do?" he cried.

Then Rosa was taken by surprise in her turn. She spoke out. "Send for a great physician, papa. Don't let us deceive ourselves; it is our only chance."

"I will ask Mr. Wyman to get a physician down from London."

"No, no; that is no use; they will put their heads together, and he will say whatever Mr. Wyman tells him. La! papa, a clever man like you, not to see what a cheat that consultation was. Why, from what you told me, one can see it was managed so that Dr. Snell could not possibly have an opinion of his own. No; no more echoes of Mr. Chatterbox. If you really want to cure me, send for Christopher Staines."

"Dr. Staines! he is very young."

"But he is very clever, and he is not an echo. He won't care how many doctors he contradicts when I am in danger. Papa, it is your child's one chance."

"I'll try it," said the old man, eagerly. "How confident you look! your color has come back. It is an inspiration. Where is he?"

"I think by this time he must be at his lodgings in Gravesend. Send to him to-morrow morning."

"Not I! I'll go to him to-night. It is only a mile, and a fine clear night."

"My own, good, kind papa! Ah! well, come what may, I have lived long enough to be loved. Yes, dear papa, save me. I am very young to die; and he loves me so dearly."

The old man bustled away to put on something warmer for his night walk, and Rosa leaned back, and the tears welled out of her eyes, now he was gone.

Before she had recovered her composure, a letter was brought her, and this was the letter from Christopher Staines, alluded to already.

She took it from the servant with averted head, not wishing it to be seen she had been crying, and she started at the handwriting; it seemed such a coincidence that it should come just as she was sending for him.

My own beloved Rosa, — I now write to tell you, with a heavy heart, that all is vain. I cannot make, nor purchase, a connection, except as others do, by time and patience. Being a bachelor is quite against a young physician. If I had a wife, and such a wife as you, I should be sure to get on; you would increase my connection very soon. What, then, lies before us? I see but two things — to wait till we are old, and our pockets are filled, but our hearts chilled or soured; or else to marry at once, and climb the hill together. If you love me as I love you, you will be saving till the battle is over; and I feel I could find energy and fortitude for both. Your father, who thinks so much of wealth, can surely settle something on *you;* and I am not too poor to furnish a house and start fair. I am not quite obscure — my lectures have given me a name — and to you, my own love, I hope I may say that I know more

than many of my elders, thanks to good schools, good method, a genuine love of my noble profession, and a tendency to study from my childhood. Will you not risk something on my ability? If not, God help me, for I shall lose you; and what is life, or fame, or wealth, or any mortal thing to me, without you? I cannot accept your father's decision; *you* must decide my fate.

You see I have kept away from you until I can do so no more. All this time the world to me has seemed to want the sun, and my heart pines and sickens for one sight of you. Darling Rosa, pray let me look at your face once more.

When this reaches you I shall be at your gate. Let me see you, though but for a moment, and let me hear my fate from no lips but yours. —My own love, your heart-broken lover,

CHRISTOPHER STAINES.

This letter stunned her at first. Her mind of late had been turned away from love to such stern realities. Now she began to be sorry she had not told him. "Poor thing!" she said to herself, "he little knows that now all is changed. Papa, I sometimes think, would deny me nothing now; it is I who would not marry him — to be buried by him in a month or two. Poor Christopher!"

The next moment she started up in dismay. Why, her father would miss him. No; perhaps catch him waiting for her. What would he think? What would Christopher think? — that she had shown her papa his letter.

She rang the bell hard. The footman came.

"Send Harriet to me this instant. Oh, and ask papa to come to me."

Then she sat down and dashed off a line to Christopher. This was for Harriet to take out to him. Anything better than for Christopher to be caught doing what was wrong.

The footman came back first. "If you please, miss, master has gone out."

"Run after him — the road to Gravesend."

"Yes, miss."

"No. It is no use. Never mind."

"Yes, miss."

Then Harriet came in. "Did you want me, miss?"

"Yes. No — never mind now."

She was afraid to do anything for fear of making matters worse. She went to the window, and stood looking anxiously out, with her hands working. Presently she uttered a little scream and shrank away to the sofa. She sank down on it, half sitting, half lying, hid her face in her hands, and waited.

Staines, with a lover's impatience, had been more than an hour at the gate, or walking up and down close by it, his heart now burning with hope, now freezing with fear, that she would decline a meeting on these terms.

At last the postman came, and then he saw he was too soon; but now in a few minutes Rosa would have his letter, and then he should soon know whether she would come or not. He looked up at the drawing-room windows. They were full of light. She was there in all probability. Yet she did not come to them. But why should she, if she was coming out?

He walked up and down the road. She did not come. His heart began to sicken with doubt. His head drooped; and perhaps it was owing to this that he almost ran against a gentleman who was coming the other way. The moon shone bright on both faces.

"Dr. Staines!" said Mr. Lusignan surprised. Christopher uttered an ejaculation more eloquent than words.

They stared at each other.

"You were coming to call on us?"

"N—no," stammered Christopher.

Lusignan thought that odd; however, he said politely, "No matter, it is fortunate. Would you mind coming in?"

"No," faltered Christopher, and stared at him ruefully, puzzled more and more, but beginning to think, after all, it might be a casual meeting.

They entered the gate, and in one moment he saw Rosa at the window, and she saw him.

Then he altered his opinion again. Rosa had sent her father out to him. But how was this? The old man did not seem angry. Christopher's heart gave a leap inside him, and he began to glow with the wildest hopes. For, what could this mean but relenting?

Mr. Lusignan took him first into the study, and lighted two candles himself. He did not want the servants prying.

The lights showed Christopher a change in Mr. Lusignan. He looked ten years older.

"You are not well, sir," said Christopher gently.

"My health is well enough, but I am a broken-hearted man. Dr. Staines, forget all that passed here at your last visit. All that is over. Thank you for loving my poor girl as you do; give me your hand; God bless you. Sir, I am sorry to say it is as a physician I invite you now. She is ill, sir, very, very ill."

"Ill! and not tell me!"

"She kept it from you, my poor friend, not to distress you; and she tried to keep it from me, but how could she? For two months she has had some terrible complaint—it is destroying her. She is the ghost of herself. Oh, my poor child! my child!"

The old man sobbed aloud. The young man stood trembling, and ashy pale. Still, the habits of his profession, and the experience of dangers overcome, together with a certain sense of power, kept him up; but, above all, love and duty said, "Be firm." He asked for an outline of the symptoms.

They alarmed him greatly.

"Let us lose no more time," said he. "I will see her at once."

"Do you object to my being present?"

"Of course not."

"Shall I tell you what Dr. Snell says it is, and Mr. Wyman?"

"By all means — after I have seen her."

This comforted Mr. Lusignan. He was to get an independent judgment, at all events.

When they reached the top of the stairs, Dr. Staines paused and leaned against the baluster. "Give me a moment," said he. "The patient must not know how my heart is beating, and she must see nothing in my face but what I choose her to see. Give me your hand once more, sir; let us both control ourselves. Now announce me."

Mr. Lusignan opened the door, and said, with forced cheerfulness, "Dr. Staines, my dear, come to give you the benefit of his skill."

She lay on the sofa, just as we left her. Only her bosom began to heave.

Then Christopher Staines drew himself up, and the majesty of knowledge and love together seemed to dilate his noble frame. He fixed his eye on that reclining, panting figure, and stepped lightly but firmly across the room to know the worst, like a lion walking up to levelled lances.

CHAPTER III.

The young physician walked steadily up to his patient without taking his eye off her, and drew a chair to her side.

Then she took down one hand — the left — and gave it him, averting her face tenderly, and still covering it with her right; "For," said she to herself, "I am such a fright now." This opportune reflection, and her heaving bosom, proved that she at least felt herself something more than his patient. Her pretty consciousness made his task more difficult; nevertheless, he only allowed himself to press her hand tenderly with both his palms one moment, and then he entered on his functions bravely. "I am here as your physician."

"Very well," said she softly.

He gently detained the hand, and put his finger lightly to her pulse; it was palpitating, and a fallacious test. Oh, how that beating pulse, by love's electric current, set his own heart throbbing in a moment!

He put her hand gently, reluctantly down, and said, "Oblige me by turning this way." She turned, and he winced internally at the change in her; but his face betrayed nothing. He looked at her full; and, after a pause, put her some questions: one was as to the color of the hemorrhage. She said it was bright red.

"Not a tinge of purple?"

"No," said she hopefully, mistaking him.

He suppressed a sigh.

Then he listened at her shoulder-blade and at her chest, and made her draw her breath while he was

listening. The acts were simple, and usual in medicine, but there was a deep, patient, silent intensity about his way of doing them.

Mr. Lusignan crept nearer, and stood with both hands on a table, and his old head bowed, awaiting yet dreading the verdict.

Up to this time, Dr. Staines, instead of tapping and squeezing, and pulling the patient about, had never touched her with his hand, and only grazed her with his ear; but now he said "Allow me," and put both hands to her waist, more lightly and reverently than I can describe; "Now draw a deep breath, if you please."

"There!"

"If you could draw a deeper still," said he, insinuatingly.

"There, then!" said she, a little pettishly.

Dr. Staines's eye kindled.

"Hum!" said he. Then, after a considerable pause, "Are you better or worse after each hemorrhage?"

"La!" said Rosa; "they never asked me that. Why, better."

"No faintness?"

"Not a bit."

"Rather a sense of relief, perhaps?"

"Yes; I feel lighter and better."

The examination was concluded.

Dr. Staines looked at Rosa, and then at her father. The agony in that aged face, and the love that agony implied, won him, and it was to the parent he turned to give his verdict.

"The hemorrhage is from the lungs"—

Lusignan interrupted him: "From the lungs!" cried he, in dismay.

"Yes; a slight congestion of the lungs."

"But not incurable! Oh, not incurable, doctor!"

"Heaven forbid! It is curable — easily — by removing the cause."

"And what is the cause?"

"The cause?" — he hesitated, and looked rather uneasy. — "Well, the cause, sir, is — tight stays."

The tranquillity of the meeting was instantly disturbed. "Tight stays! Me!" cried Rosa. "Why, I am the loosest girl in England. Look, papa!" And, without any apparent effort, she drew herself in, and poked her little fist between her sash and her gown. "There!"

Dr. Staines smiled sadly and a little sarcastically: he was evidently shy of encountering the lady in this argument; but he was more at his ease with her father; so he turned towards him and lectured him freely.

"That is wonderful, sir; and the first four or five female patients that favored me with it, made me disbelieve my other senses; but Miss Lusignan is now about the thirtieth who has shown me that marvellous feat, with a calm countenance that belies the herculean effort. Nature has her every-day miracles: a boa-constrictor, diameter seventeen inches, can swallow a buffalo; a woman, with her stays bisecting her almost, and lacerating her skin, can yet for one moment make herself seem slack, to deceive a juvenile physician. The snake is the miracle of expansion; the woman is the prodigy of contraction."

"Highly grateful for the comparison!" cried Rosa. "Women and snakes!"

Dr. Staines blushed and looked uncomfortable. "I did not mean to be offensive; it certainly was a very clumsy comparison.

"What does that matter?" said Mr. Lusignan, impatiently. "Be quiet, Rosa, and let Dr. Staines and me talk sense."

"Oh, then I am nobody in the business!" said this wise young lady.

"You are everybody," said Staines, soothingly. "But," suggested he, obsequiously, "if you don't mind, I would rather explain my views to your father — on this one subject."

"And a pretty subject it is!"

Dr. Staines then invited Mr. Lusignan to his lodgings, and promised to explain the matter anatomically. "Meantime," said he, "would you be good enough to put your hands to my waist, as I did to the patient's."

Mr. Lusignan complied; and the patient began to titter directly, to put them out of countenance.

"Please observe what takes place when I draw a full breath.

"Now apply the same test to the patient. Breathe your best, please, Miss Lusignan."

The patient put on a face full of saucy mutiny.

"To oblige us both."

"Oh, how tiresome!"

"I am aware it is rather laborious," said Staines, a little dryly; "but to oblige your father!"

"Oh, anything to oblige papa," said she, spitefully. "There! And I do hope it will be the last — la! no; I don't hope that, neither."

Dr. Staines politely ignored her little attempts to interrupt the argument. "You found, sir, that the muscles of my waist, and my intercostal ribs themselves, rose and fell with each inhalation and exhalation of air by the lungs."

"I did; but my daughter's waist was like dead wood, and so were her lower ribs."

At this volunteer statement, Rosa colored to her temples. "Thanks, papa! Pack me off to London, and sell me for a big doll!"

"In other words," said the lecturer, mild and pertinacious, "with us the lungs have room to blow, and the whole bony frame expands elastic with them, like the woodwork of a blacksmith's bellows; but with this patient, and many of her sex, that noble and divinely framed bellows is crippled and confined by a powerful machine of human construction; so it works lamely and feebly: consequently too little air, and of course too little oxygen, passes through that spongy organ whose very life is air. Now mark the special result in this case: being otherwise healthy and vigorous, our patient's system sends into the lungs more blood than that one crippled organ can deal with; a small quantity becomes extravasated at odd times; it accumulates, and would become dangerous; then Nature, strengthened by sleep, and by some hours' relief from the diabolical engine, makes an effort and flings it off: that is why the hemorrhage comes in the morning, and why she is the better for it, feeling neither faint nor sick, but relieved of a weight. This, sir, is the *rationale* of the complaint; and it is to you I must look for the cure. To judge from my other female patients, and from the few words Miss Lusignan has let fall, I fear we must not count on any very hearty co-operation from her: but you are her father, and have great authority; I conjure you to use it to the full, as you once used it — to my sorrow — in this very room. I am forgetting my character. I was asked here only as her physician. Good-evening."

He gave a little gulp, and hurried away, with an abruptness that touched the father and offended the sapient daughter.

However, Mr. Lusignan followed him, and stopped him before he left the house, and thanked him warmly; and to his surprise, begged him to call again in a day or two.

"Well, Rosa, what do you say?"

"I say that I am very unfortunate in my doctors. Mr. Wyman is a chatterbox and knows nothing. Dr. Snell is Mr. Wyman's echo. Christopher is a genius, and they are always full of crotchets. A pretty doctor! Gone away, and not prescribed for me!"

Mr. Lusignan admitted it was odd. "But, after all," said he, "if medicine does you no good?"

"Ah! but any medicine *he* had prescribed would have done me good, and that makes it all the unkinder."

"If you think so highly of his skill, why not take his advice? It can do no harm."

"No harm? Why, if I was to leave them off I should catch a dreadful cold; and that would be sure to settle on my chest, and carry me off, in my present delicate state. Besides, it is so unfeminine not to wear them."

This staggered Mr. Lusignan, and he was afraid to press the point; but what Staines had said fermented in his mind.

Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman continued their visits and their prescriptions.

The patient got a little worse.

Mr. Lusignan hoped Christopher would call again, but he did not.

When Dr. Staines had satisfied himself that the disorder was easily curable, then wounded pride found an entrance even into his loving heart. That two strangers should have been consulted before him! He was only sent for because they could not cure her.

As he seemed in no hurry to repeat his visit, Mr. Lusignan called on him, and said, politely, he had hoped to receive another call ere this. "Personally," said he, "I was much struck with your observations; but my daughter is afraid she will catch cold if she leaves off her corset, and that, you know, might be very serious."

Dr. Staines groaned, and, when he had groaned, he lectured. "Female patients are wonderfully monotonous in this matter; they have a programme of evasions; and whether the patient is a lady or a housemaid, she seldom varies from that programme. You find her breathing life's air with half a bellows, and you tell her so. 'Oh, no,' says she; and does the gigantic feat of contraction we witnessed that evening at your house. But, on inquiry, you learn there is a raw red line ploughed in her flesh by the cruel stays. 'What is that?' you ask, and flatter yourself you have pinned her. Not a bit. 'That was the last pair. I changed them, because they hurt me.' Driven out of that by proofs of recent laceration, they say, 'If I leave them off I should catch my death of cold,' which is equivalent to saying there is no flannel in the shops, no common sense nor needles at home."

He then laid before him some large French plates, showing the organs of the human trunk, and bade him observe in how small a space, and with what skill, the Creator has packed so many large yet delicate organs, so that they should be free and secure from friction, though so close to each other. He showed him the liver, an organ weighing four pounds, and of large circumference; the lungs, a very large organ, suspended in the chest and impatient of pressure; the heart, the stomach, the spleen, all of them too closely and artfully packed to bear any further compression.

Having thus taken him by the eye, he took him by the mind.

"Is it a small thing for the creature to say to her Creator, 'I can pack all this egg-china better than you can,' and thereupon to jam all those vital organs close, by a powerful, a very powerful and ingenious machine? Is it a small thing for that sex, which, for good reasons,

the Omniscient has made larger in the waist than the male, to say to her Creator, 'You don't know your business; women ought to be smaller in the waist than men, and shall be throughout the civilized world'?"

In short, he delivered so many true and pointed things on this trite subject, that the old gentleman was convinced, and begged him to come over that very evening and convince Rosa.

Dr. Staines shook his head dolefully, and all his fire died out of him at having to face the fair. "Reason will be wasted. Authority is the only weapon. My profession and my reading have both taught me that the whole character of her sex undergoes a change the moment a man interferes with their dress. From Chaucer's day to our own, neither public satire nor private remonstrance has ever shaken any of their monstrous fashions. Easy, obliging, pliable, and weaker of will than men in other things, do but touch their dress, however objectionable, and rock is not harder, iron is not more stubborn, than these soft and yielding creatures. It is no earthly use my coming — I'll come."

He came that very evening, and saw directly she was worse. "Of course," said he, sadly, "you have not taken my advice."

Rosa replied with a toss and an evasion, "I was not worth a prescription!"

"A physician can prescribe without sending his patient to the druggist; and when he does, then it is his words are gold."

Rosa shook her head with an air of lofty incredulity.

He looked ruefully at Mr. Lusignan and was silent. Rosa smiled sarcastically; she thought he was at his wit's end.

Not quite: he was cudgelling his brains in search of some horribly unscientific argument, that might prevail;

for he felt science would fall dead upon so fair an antagonist. At last his eye kindled; he had hit on an argument unscientific enough for anybody, he thought. Said he, ingratiatingly, "You believe the Old Testament?"

"Of course I do, every syllable."

"And the lessons it teaches?"

"Certainly!"

"Then let me tell you a story from that book. A Syrian general had a terrible disease. He consulted Elisha by deputy. Elisha said, 'Bathe seven times in a certain river, Jordan, and you will get well.' The general did not like this at all; he wanted a prescription; wanted to go to the druggist; didn't believe in hydropathy to begin, and, in any case, turned up his nose at Jordan. What! bathe in an Israelitish brook, when his own country boasted noble rivers, with a reputation for sanctity into the bargain? In short, he preferred his leprosy to such irregular medicine. But it happened, by some immense fortuity, that one of his servants, though an Oriental, was a friend, instead of a flatterer; and this sensible fellow said, 'If the prophet told you to do some great and difficult thing, to get rid of this fearful malady, would not you do it, however distasteful? and can you hesitate when he merely says, Wash in the Jordan, and be healed?' The general listened to good sense, and cured himself. Your case is parallel. You would take quantities of foul medicine; you would submit to some painful operation, if life and health depended on it; then why not do a small thing for a great result? You have only to take off an unnatural machine which cripples your growing frame, and was unknown to every one of the women whose forms in Parian marble the world admires. Off with that monstrosity, and your cure is as certain as the Syrian general's; though science, and not inspiration, dictates the easy remedy."

Rosa had listened impatiently, and now replied with some warmth, "This is shockingly profane. The idea of comparing yourself to Elisha, and me to a horrid leper! Much obliged! Not that I know what a leper is."

"Come, come! that is not fair," said Mr. Lusignan. "He only compared the situation, not the people."

"But, papa, the Bible is not to be dragged into the common affairs of life."

"Then what on earth is the use of it?"

"Oh, papa! Well, it is not Sunday, but I have had a sermon. This is the clergyman, and you are the commentator — he! he! And so now let us go back from divinity to medicine. I repeat" (this was the first time she had said it) "that my other doctors give me real prescriptions, written in hieroglyphics. You can't look at them without feeling there *must* be something in them."

An angry spot rose on Christopher's cheek, but he only said, "And are your other doctors satisfied with the progress your disorder is making under their superintendence?"

"Perfectly! Papa, tell him what they say, and I'll find him their prescriptions." She went to a drawer, and rummaged, affecting not to listen.

Lusignan complied. "First of all, sir, I must tell you they are confident it is not the lungs, but the liver."

"The what!" shouted Christopher.

"Ah!" screamed Rosa. "Oh, don't! — bawling!"

"And don't you screech," said her father, with a look of misery and apprehension impartially distributed on the resounding pair.

"You must have misunderstood them," murmured Staines, in a voice that was now barely audible a yard off. "The hemorrhage of a bright red color, and expelled without effort or nausea?"

"From the liver — they have assured me again and again," said Lusignan.

Christopher's face still wore a look of blank amazement, till Rosa herself confirmed it positively.

Then he cast a look of agony upon her, and started up in a passion, forgetting once more that his host abhorred the sonorous. "Oh, shame! shame!" he cried, "that the noble profession of medicine should be disgraced by ignorance such as this." Then he said, sternly, "Sir, do not mistake my motives; but I decline to have anything further to do with this case, until those two gentlemen have been relieved of it; and, as this is very harsh, and on my part unprecedented, I will give you one reason out of many I *could* give you. Sir, there is no road from the liver to the throat by which blood can travel in this way, defying the laws of gravity; and they knew, from the patient, that no strong expellent force has ever been in operation. Their diagnosis, therefore, implies agnosis, or ignorance too great to be forgiven. I will not share my patient with two gentlemen who know so little of medicine, and know nothing of anatomy, which is the A B C of medicine. Can I see their prescriptions?"

These were handed to him. "Good heavens!" said he, "have you taken all these?"

"Most of them."

"Why, then you have drunk about two gallons of unwholesome liquids, and eaten a pound or two of unwholesome solids. These medicines have co-operated with the malady. The disorder lies, not in the hemorrhage, but in the precedent extravasation; that is a drain on the system; and how is the loss to be supplied? Why, by taking a little more nourishment than before; there is no other way; and probably Nature, left to herself, might have increased your appetite to meet the occasion. But those two worthies have struck that

weapon out of Nature's hand; they have peppered away at the poor ill-used stomach with drugs and draughts, not very deleterious I grant you, but all more or less indigestible, and all tending, not to whet the appetite, but to clog the stomach, or turn the stomach, or pester the stomach, and so impair the appetite, and so co-operate, indirectly, with the malady."

"This is good sense," said Lusignan. "I declare, I — I wish I knew how to get rid of them."

"Oh, I'll do that, papa."

"No, no; it is not worth a rumpus."

"I'll do it too politely for that. Christopher, you are very clever — *terribly* clever. Whenever I threw their medicines away, I was always a little better that day. I will sacrifice them to you. It *is* a sacrifice. They are both so kind and chatty, and don't grudge me hieroglyphics; now you do."

She sat down and wrote two sweet letters to Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman, thanking them for the great attention they had paid her; but finding herself getting steadily worse, in spite of all they had done for her, she proposed to discontinue her medicines for a time, and try change of air.

"And suppose they call to see whether you are changing the air?"

"In that case, papa — 'not at home.'"

The notes were addressed and despatched.

Then Dr. Staines brightened up, and said to Lusignan, "I am now happy to tell you that I have overrated the malady. The sad change I see in Miss Lusignan is partly due to the great bulk of unwholesome esculents she has been eating and drinking under the head of medicines. These discontinued, she might linger on for years, existing, though not living — the tight-laced cannot be said to live. But if she would be healthy and

happy, let her throw that diabolical machine into the fire. It is no use asking her to loosen it; she can't. Once there, the temptation is too strong. Off with it, and, take my word, you will be one of the healthiest and most vigorous young ladies in Europe."

Rosa looked rueful, and almost sullen. She said she had parted with her doctors for him, but she really could not go about without stays. "They are as loose as they can be. See!"

"That part of the programme is disposed of," said Christopher. "Please go on to No. 2. How about the raw red line where the loose machine has sawed you?"

"What red line? No such thing! Somebody or other has been peeping in at my window. I'll have the ivy cut down to-morrow."

"Simpleton!" said Mr. Lusignan, angrily. "You have let the cat out of the bag. There is such a mark, then, and this extraordinary young man has discerned it with the eye of science."

"He never discerned it at all," said Rosa, red as fire; "and, what is more, he never will."

"I don't want to. I should be very sorry to. I hope it will be gone in a week."

"I wish *you* were gone now — exposing me in this cruel way," said Rosa, angry with herself for having said an idiotic thing, and furious with him for having made her say it.

"Oh, Rosa!" said Christopher, in a voice of tenderest reproach.

But Mr. Lusignan interfered promptly. "Rosa, no noise. I will not have you snapping at your best friend and mine. If you are excited, you had better retire to your own room and compose yourself. I hate a clamor."

Rosa made a wry face at this rebuke, and then began to cry quietly.

Every tear was like a drop of blood from Christopher's heart. "Pray don't scold her, sir," said he, ready to snivel himself. "She meant nothing unkind: it is only her pretty sprightly way; and she did not really imagine a love so reverent as mine" —

"Don't *you* interfere between my father and me," said this reasonable young lady, now in an ungovernable state of feminine irritability.

"No, Rosa," said Christopher, humbly. "Mr. Lusignan," said he, "I hope you will tell her that, from the very first, I was unwilling to enter on this subject with *her*. Neither she nor I can forget my double character. I have not said half as much to her as I ought, being her physician; and yet you see I have said more than she can bear from me, who, she knows, love her and revere her. Then, once for all, do pray let me put this delicate matter into your hands: it is a case for parental authority."

"Unfatherly tyranny, that means," said Rosa. "What business have gentlemen interfering in such things? It is unheard of. I will not submit to it, even from papa."

"Well, you need not scream at me," said Mr. Lusignan; and he shrugged his shoulders to Staines. "She is impracticable, you see. If I do my duty, there will be a disturbance."

Now this roused the bile of Dr. Staines. "What, sir!" said he, "you could separate her and me by your authority, here in this very room; and yet, when her life is at stake, you abdicate! You could part her from a man who loved her with every drop of his heart, — and she said she loved him, or, at all events, preferred him to others, — and you cannot part her from a miserable corset, although you see in her poor wasted face that it is carrying her to the churchyard. In that case, sir, there is but one thing for you to do, — withdraw your

opposition and let me marry her. As her lover I am powerless; but invest me with a husband's authority, and you will soon see the roses return to her cheek, and her elastic figure expanding, and her eye beaming with health and the happiness that comes of perfect health."

Mr. Lusignan made an answer neither of his hearers expected. He said, "I have a great mind to take you at your word. I am too old and fond of quiet to drive a Simpleton in single harness."

This contemptuous speech, and, above all, the word Simpleton, which had been applied to her pretty freely by young ladies at school, and always galled her terribly, inflicted so intolerable a wound on Rosa's vanity, that she was ready to burst: on that, of course, her stays contributed their mite of physical uneasiness. Thus irritated mind and body, she burned to strike in return; and as she could not slap her father in the presence of another, she gave it Christopher back-handed.

"You can turn me out of doors," said she, "if you are tired of your daughter, but I am not such a *simpleton* as to marry a tyrant. No; he has shown the cloven foot in time. A husband's *authority*, indeed!" Then she turned her hand, and gave it him direct. "You told me a different story when you were paying your court to me; then you were to be my servant, — all hypocritical sweetness. You had better go and marry a Circassian slave. They don't wear stays, and they do wear trousers; so she will be unfeminine enough, even for you. No English lady would let her husband dictate to her about such a thing. I can have as many husbands as I like, without falling into the clutches of a tyrant. You are a rude, indelicate — And so please understand it is all over between you and me."

Both her auditors stood aghast, for she uttered this conclusion with a dignity of which the opening gave no

promise, and the occasion, weighed in masculine balances, was not worthy.

"You do not mean that. You cannot mean it," said Dr. Staines, aghast.

"I do mean it," said she, firmly; "and, if you are a gentleman, you will not compel me to say it twice — three times, I mean."

At this dagger-stroke Christopher turned very pale, but he maintained his dignity. "I am a gentleman," said he, quietly, "and a very unfortunate one. Good-by, sir; thank you kindly. Good-by, Rosa; God bless you! Oh, pray take a thought! Remember, your life and death are in your own hand now. I am powerless."

And he left the house in sorrow, and just, but not pettish, indignation.

When he was gone, father and daughter looked at each other, and there was the silence that succeeds a storm.

Rosa, feeling the most uneasy, was the first to express her satisfaction. "There, *he* is gone, and I am glad of it. Now you and I shall never quarrel again. I was quite right. Such impertinence! Such indelicacy! A fine prospect for me if I had married such a man! However, he is gone, and so there's an end of it. The idea! telling a young lady, before her father, she is tight-laced! If you had not been there I could have forgiven him. But I am not; it is a story. Now," suddenly exalting her voice, "I know you believe him."

"I say nothing," whispered papa, hoping to still her by example. This *ruse* did not succeed.

"But you look volumes," cried she: "and I can't bear it. I won't bear it. If you don't believe *me*, ask my *maid*." And with this felicitous speech, she rang the bell.

"You'll break the wire if you don't mind," suggested her father, piteously.

"All the better! Why should not wires be broken as well as my heart? Oh, here she is! Now, Harriet, come here."

"Yes, miss."

"And tell the truth. *Am* I tight-laced?"

Harriet looked in her face a moment to see what was required of her, and then said, "That you are not, miss. I never dressed a young lady as wore 'em easier than you do."

"There, papa! That will do, Harriet."

Harriet retired as far as the keyhole; she saw something was up.

"Now," said Rosa, "you see I was right; and, after all, it was a match you did not approve. Well, it is all over, and now you may write to your favorite, Colonel Bright. If he comes here, I'll box his old ears. I hate him. I hate them all. Forgive your wayward girl. I'll stay with you all my days. I dare say that will not be long, now I have quarrelled with my guardian angel; and all for what? Papa! papa! how *can* you sit there and not speak me one word of comfort? *'Simpleton?'* Ah! that I am to throw away a love a queen is scarcely worthy of; and all for what? Really, if it wasn't for the ingratitude and wickedness of the thing, it is too laughable. Ha! ha!—oh! oh! oh!—ha! ha! ha!"

And off she went into hysterics, and began to gulp and choke frightfully.

Her father cried for help in dismay. In ran Harriet, saw, and screamed, but did not lose her head; this veracious person whipped a pair of scissors off the table, and cut the young lady's stay-laces directly. Then there was a burst of imprisoned beauty; a deep, deep sigh of relief came from a bosom that would have done honor to Diana; and the scene soon concluded with fits of harmless weeping, renewed at intervals.

When it had settled down to this, her father, to soothe her, said he would write to Dr. Staines, and bring about a reconciliation, if she liked.

"No," said she, "you shall kill me sooner. I should die of shame."

She added, "Oh, pray, from this hour, never mention his name to me."

And then she had another cry.

Mr. Lusignan was a sensible man: he dropped the subject for the present; but he made up his mind to one thing — that he would never part with Dr. Staines as a physician.

Next day Rosa kept her own room until dinner-time, and was as unhappy as she deserved to be. She spent her time in sewing on stiff flannel linings and crying. She half hoped Christopher would write to her, so that she might write back that she forgave him. But not a line.

At half-past six her volatile mind took a turn, real or affected. She would cry no more for an ungrateful fellow, — ungrateful for not seeing through the stone walls how she had been employed all the morning; and making it up. So she bathed her red eyes, made a great alteration in her dress, and came dancing into the room humming an Italian ditty.

As they were sitting together in the dining-room after dinner, two letters came by the same post to Mr. Lusignan from Mr. Wyman and Dr. Snell.

Mr. Wyman's letter: —

Dear Sir, — I am sorry to hear from Miss Lusignan that she intends to discontinue medical advice. The disorder was progressing favorably, and nothing to be feared, under proper treatment.

Yours, etc.

Dr. Snell's letter: —

Dear Sir, — Miss Lusignan has written to me somewhat impatiently, and seems disposed to dispense with my visits. I do not, however, think it right to withdraw without telling you candidly that this is an unwise step. Your daughter's health is in a very precarious condition.

Yours, etc.

Rosa burst out laughing. "I have nothing to fear, and I'm on the brink of the grave. That comes of writing without a consultation. If they had written at one table, I should have been neither well nor ill. Poor Christopher!" and her sweet face began to work piteously.

"There! there! drink a glass of wine."

She did, and a tear with it, that ran into the glass like lightning.

Warned by this that grief sat very near the bright, hilarious surface, Mr. Lusignan avoided all emotional subjects for the present. Next day, however, he told her she might dismiss her lover, but no power should make him dismiss his pet physician, unless her health improved.

"I will not give you that excuse for inflicting him on me again," said the young hypocrite.

She kept her word. She got better and better, stronger, brighter, gayer.

She took to walking every day, and increasing the distance, till she could walk ten miles without fatigue.

Her favorite walk was to a certain cliff that commanded a noble view of the sea. To get to it she must pass through the town of Gravesend; and we may be sure she did not pass so often through that city without some idea of meeting the lover she had used so ill, and eliciting an *apology* from him. Sly puss!

When she had walked twenty times, or thereabouts, through the town, and never seen him, she began to fear she had offended him past hope. Then she used to cry at the end of every walk.

But by and by bodily health, vanity, and temper combined to rouse the defiant spirit. Said she, "If he really loved me, he would not take my word in such a hurry. And besides, why does he not watch me, and find out what I am doing, and where I walk?"

At last she really began to persuade herself that she was an ill-used and slighted girl. She was very angry at times, and disconsolate at others; a mixed state in which hasty and impulsive young ladies commit lifelong follies.

Mr. Lusignan observed the surface only: he saw his invalid daughter getting better every day, till at last she became a picture of health and bodily vigor. Relieved of his fears, he troubled his head but little about Christopher Staines. Yet he esteemed him, and had got to like him; but Rosa was a beauty, and could do better than marry a struggling physician, however able. He launched out into a little gayety, resumed his quiet dinner-parties; and, after some persuasion, took his now blooming daughter to a ball given by the officers of Chatham.

She was the belle of the ball beyond dispute, and danced with ethereal grace and athletic endurance. She was madly fond of waltzing, and here she encountered what she was pleased to call a divine dancer. It was a Mr. Reginald Falcon, a gentleman who had retired to the seaside to recruit his health and finances sore tried by London and Paris. Falcon had run through his fortune, but had acquired, in the process, certain talents which, as they cost the acquirer dear, so they sometimes repay him, especially if he is not overburdened with principle, and adopts the notion that, the world having plucked him, he has a right to pluck the world. He

could play billiards well, but never so well as when backing himself for a heavy stake. He could shoot pigeons well, and his shooting improved under that which makes some marksmen miss — a heavy bet against the gun. He danced to perfection; and being a well-bred, experienced, brazen, adroit fellow, who knew a little of everything that was going, he had always plenty to say. Above all, he had made a particular study of the fair sex; had met with many successes, many rebuffs; and, at last, by keen study of their minds, and a habit he had acquired of watching their faces, and shifting his helm accordingly, had learned the great art of pleasing them. They admired his face; to me, the short space between his eyes and his hair, his aquiline nose, and thin straight lips, suggested the bird of prey a little too much: but to fair doves, born to be clutched, this similitude perhaps was not very alarming, even if they observed it.

Rosa danced several times with him, and told him he danced like an angel. He informed her that was because, for once, he was dancing with an angel. She laughed and blushed. He flattered deliciously, and it cost him little; for he fell in love with her that night, deeper than he had ever been in his whole life of intrigue. He asked leave to call on her: she looked a little shy at that, and did not respond. He instantly withdrew his proposal, with an apology and a sigh that raised her pity. However, she was not a forward girl, even when excited by dancing and charmed with her partner; so she left him to find his own way out of that difficulty.

He was not long about it. At the end of the next waltz he asked her if he might venture to solicit an introduction to her father.

"Oh, certainly," said she. "What a selfish girl I am! this is terribly dull for him."

The introduction being made, and Rosa being engaged

for the next three dances, Mr. Falcon sat by Mr. Lusignan and entertained him. For this little piece of apparent self-denial he was paid in various coin: Lusignan found out he was the son of an old acquaintance, and so the door of Kent Villa opened to him; meantime, Rosa Lusignan never passed him, even in the arms of a cavalry officer, without bestowing a glance of approval and gratitude on him. "What a good-hearted young man!" thought she. "How kind of him to amuse papa; and now I can stay so much longer."

Falcon followed up the dance by a call, and was infinitely agreeable: followed up the call by another, and admired Rosa with so little disguise that Mr. Lusignan said to her, "I think you have made a conquest. His father had considerable estates in Essex. I presume he inherits them."

"Oh, never mind his estates," said Rosa, "he dances like an angel, and gossips charmingly, and *is* so nice."

Christopher Staines pined for this girl in silence: his fine frame got thinner, his pale cheek paler, as she got rosier and rosier; and how? Why, by following the very advice she had snubbed him for giving her. At last, he heard she had been the belle of a ball, and that she had been seen walking miles from home, and blooming as a Hebe. Then his deep anxiety ceased, his pride stung him furiously; he began to think of his own value, and to struggle with all his might against his deep love. Sometimes he would even inveigh against her, and call her a fickle, ungrateful girl, capable of no strong passion but vanity. Many a hard term he applied to her in his sorrowful solitude; but not a word when he had a hearer. He found it hard to rest: he kept dashing up to London and back. He plunged furiously into study. He groaned and sighed, and fought the hard and bitter fight that is too often the lot of the deep

that love the shallow. Strong, but single-hearted, no other lady could comfort him. He turned from female company, and shunned all for the fault of one.

The inward contest wore him. He began to look very thin and wan; and all for a Simpleton!

Mr. Falcon prolonged his stay in the neighborhood, and drove a handsome dogcart over twice a week to visit Mr. Lusignan.

He used to call on that gentleman at four o'clock, for at that hour Mr. Lusignan was always out, and his daughter always at home.

She was at home at that hour because she took her long walks in the morning. While her new admirer was in bed, or dressing, or breakfasting, she was springing along the road with all the elasticity of youth, and health, and native vigor, braced by daily exercise.

Twenty-one of these walks did she take, with no other result than health and appetite; but the twenty-second was more fertile — extremely fertile. Starting later than usual, she passed through Gravesend while Reginald Falcon was smoking at his front window. He saw her, and instantly doffed his dressing-gown and donned his coat to follow her. He was madly in love with her, and being a man who had learned to shoot pigeons and opportunities flying, he instantly resolved to join her in her walk, get her clear of the town, by the sea-beach, where beauty melts, and propose to her. Yes, marriage had not been hitherto his habit, but this girl was peerless: he was pledged by honor and gratitude to Phœbe Dale; but hang all that now. "No man should marry one woman when he loves another; it is dishonorable." He got into the street and followed her as fast as he could without running.

It was not so easy to catch her. Ladies are not built for running; but a fine, tall, symmetrical girl who has

practised walking fast can cover the ground wonderfully in walking — if she chooses. It was a sight to see how Rosa Lusignan squared her shoulders and stepped out from the waist like a Canadian girl skating, while her elastic foot slapped the pavement as she spanked along.

She had nearly cleared the town before Falcon came up with her.

He was hardly ten yards from her when an unexpected incident occurred. She whisked round the corner of Bird Street, and ran plump against Christopher Staines; in fact, she darted into his arms, and her face almost touched the breast she had wounded so deeply.

CHAPTER IV.

Rosa cried "Oh!" and put up her hands to her face in lovely confusion, coloring like a peony.

"I beg your pardon," said Christopher, stiffly, but in a voice that trembled.

"No," said Rosa, "it was I ran against you. I walk so fast now. Hope I did not hurt you."

"Hurt me?"

"Well, then, frighten you?"

No answer.

"Oh, please don't quarrel with me in the *street*," said Rosa, cunningly implying that he was the quarrelsome one. "I am going on the beach. Good-by!" This adieu she uttered softly, and in a hesitating tone that belied it. She started off, however, but much more slowly than she was going before; and, as she went, she turned her head with infinite grace, and kept looking askant down at the pavement two yards behind her: moreover she went close to the wall, and left room at her side for another to walk.

Christopher hesitated a moment; but the mute invitation, so arch yet timid, so pretty, tender, sly, and womanly, was too much for him, as it has generally proved for males, and the philosopher's foot was soon in the very place to which the Simpleton with the mere tail of her eye directed it.

They walked along, side by side, in silence, Staines agitated, gloomy, confused, Rosa radiant and glowing, yet not knowing what to say for herself, and wanting Christopher to begin. So they walked along without a word.

Falcon followed them at some distance to see whether it was an admirer or only an acquaintance. A lover he never dreamed of; she had shown such evident pleasure in his company, and had received his visits alone so constantly.

However, when the pair had got to the beach, and were walking slower and slower, he felt a pang of rage and jealousy, turned on his heel with an audible curse, and found Phœbe Dale a few yards behind him with a white face and a peculiar look. He knew what the look meant; he had brought it to that faithful face before to-day.

"You are better, Miss Lusignan."

"Better, Dr. Staines? I am health itself, thanks to — hem!"

"Our estrangement has agreed with you?" This very bitterly.

"You know very well it is not that. Oh, please don't make me cry in the streets."

This humble petition, or rather meek threat, led to another long silence. It was continued till they had nearly reached the shore. But, meantime, Rosa's furtive eyes scanned Christopher's face, and her conscience smote her at the signs of suffering. She felt a desire to beg his pardon with deep humility; but she suppressed that weakness. She hung her head with a pretty, sheepish air, and asked him if he could not think of something agreeable to say to one after deserting one so long.

"I am afraid not," said Christopher, bluntly. "I have an awkward habit of speaking the truth; and some people can't bear that, not even when it is spoken for their good."

"That depends on temper, and nerves, and things," said Rosa, deprecatingly; then softly, "I could bear anything from you now."

"Indeed!" said Christopher, grimly. "Well, then, I hear you had no sooner got rid of your old lover, for loving you too well and telling you the truth, than you took up another, — some flimsy man of fashion, who will tell you any lie you like."

"It is a story, a wicked story," cried Rosa, thoroughly alarmed. "Me, a lover! He dances like an angel; I can't help that."

"Are his visits at your house like angels' — few and far between?" And the true lover's brow lowered black upon her for the first time.

Rosa changed color, and her eyes fell a moment. "Ask papa," she said. "His father was an old friend of papa's."

"Rosa, you are prevaricating. Young men do not call on old gentlemen when there is an attractive young lady in the house."

The argument was getting too close; so Rosa operated a diversion. "So," said she, with a sudden air of lofty disdain, swiftly and adroitly assumed, "you have had me watched?"

"Not I; I only hear what people say."

"Listen to gossip and not have me watched! That shows how little you really cared for me. Well, if you had, you would have made a little discovery, that is all."

"Should I?" said Christopher, puzzled. "What?"

"I shall not tell you. Think what you please. Yes, sir, you would have found out that I take long walks every day, all alone; and what is more, that I walk through Gravesend, hoping — like a goose — that somebody really loved me, and would meet me, and beg my pardon; and if he had, I should have told him it was only my tongue, and my nerves, and things; my heart was his, and my gratitude. And after all, what do words

signify, when I am a good, obedient girl at bottom? So that is what you have lost by not condescending to look after me. Fine love! — Christopher, beg my pardon."

"May I inquire for what?"

"Why, for not understanding me; for not knowing that I should be sorry the moment you were gone. I took them off the very next day, to please you."

"Took off whom? — Oh, I understand. You did? Then you *are* a good girl."

"Didn't I tell you I was? A good, obedient girl, and anything but a flirt."

"I don't say that."

"But I do. Don't interrupt. It is to your good advice I owe my health; and to love anybody but you, when I owe you my love and my life, I must be a heartless, ungrateful, worthless — Oh, Christopher, forgive me! No, no; I mean, beg my pardon."

"I'll do both," said Christopher, taking her in his arms. "I beg your pardon, and I forgive you."

Rosa leaned her head tenderly on his shoulder, and began to sigh. "Oh, dear, dear! I am a wicked, foolish girl, not fit to walk alone."

On this admission, Christopher spoke out, and urged her to put an end to all these unhappy misunderstandings, and to his new torment, jealousy, by marrying him.

"And so I would this very minute, if papa would consent. But," said she, slyly, "you never can be so foolish to wish it. What! a wise man like you marry a simpleton!"

"Did I ever call you that?" asked Christopher, reproachfully.

"No, dear; but you are the only one who has not; and perhaps I should lose even the one, if you were to marry me. Oh, husbands are not so polite as lovers! I have observed that, simpleton or not."

Christopher assured her that he took quite a different view of her character; he believed her to be too profound for shallow people to read all in a moment: he even intimated that he himself had experienced no little difficulty in understanding her at odd times. "And so," said he, "they turn round upon you, and instead of saying, 'We are too shallow to fathom you,' they pretend you are a simpleton."

This solution of the mystery had never occurred to Rosa, nor indeed was it likely to occur to any creature less ingenious than a lover: it pleased her hugely; her fine eyes sparkled, and she nestled closer still to the strong arm that was to parry every ill, from mortal disease to galling epithets.

She listened with a willing ear to all his reasons, his hopes, his fears, and, when they reached her father's door, it was settled that he should dine there that day, and urge his suit to her father after dinner. She would implore the old gentleman to listen to it favorably.

The lovers parted, and Christopher went home like one who has awakened from a hideous dream to daylight and happiness.

He had not gone far before he met a dashing dogcart, driven by an exquisite. He turned to look after it, and saw it drive up to Kent Villa.

In a moment he divined his rival, and a sickness of heart came over him. But he recovered himself directly, and said, "If that is the fellow, she will not receive him now."

She did receive him though: at all events, the dogcart stood at the door, and its master remained inside.

Christopher stood, and counted the minutes: five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, and still the dogcart stood there.

It was more than he could bear. He turned savagely,

and strode back to Gravesend, resolving that all this torture should end that night, one way or other.

Phœbe Dale was the daughter of a farmer in Essex, and one of the happiest young women in England till she knew Reginald Falcon, Esq.

She was reared on wholesome food, in wholesome air, and used to churn butter, make bread, cook a bit now and then, cut out and sew all her own dresses, get up her own linen, make hay, ride anything on four legs; and, for all that, was a great reader, and taught in the Sunday school to oblige the vicar; wrote a neat hand, and was a good arithmetician, kept all the house accounts and farm accounts. She was a musician, too, — not profound, but very correct. She would take her turn at the harmonium in church, and, when she was there, you never heard a wrong note in the bass, nor an inappropriate flourish, nor bad time. She could sing, too, but never would, except her part in a psalm. Her voice was a deep contralto, and she chose to be ashamed of this heavenly organ, because a pack of envious girls had giggled, and said it was like a man's.

In short, her natural ability and the range and variety of her useful accomplishments were considerable; not that she was a prodigy; but she belonged to a small class of women in this island who are not too high to use their arms, nor too low to cultivate their minds; and, having a faculty and a habit deplorably rare amongst her sex, viz., Attention, she had profited by her miscellaneous advantages.

Her figure and face both told her breed at once: here was an old English pastoral beauty; not the round-backed, narrow-chested cottager, but the well-fed, erect rustic, with broad, full bust and massive shoulder, and arm as hard as a rock with health and constant use; a hand

"SO IT IS A LADY THIS TIME."

finely cut, though neither small nor very white, and just a little hard inside, compared with Luxury's soft palm; a face honest, fair, and rather large than small; not beautiful, but exceedingly comely; a complexion not pink and white, but that delicately blended brickdusty color, which tints the whole cheek in fine gradation, outlasts other complexions twenty years, and beautifies the true Northern, even in old age. Gray, limpid, honest, point-blank, searching eyes; hair true nut-brown, without a shade of red or black; and a high, smooth forehead, full of sense. Across it ran one deep wrinkle that did not belong to her youth. That wrinkle was the brand of trouble, the line of agony. It had come of loving above her, yet below her, and of loving an egotist.

Three years before our tale commenced, a gentleman's horse ran away with him, and threw him on a heap of stones by the roadside, not very far from Farmer Dale's gate. The farmer had him taken in. The doctor said he must not be moved. He was insensible; his cheek like delicate wax; his fair hair like silk stained with blood. He became Phœbe's patient, and, in due course, her convalescent: his pale, handsome face and fascinating manners gained one charm more from weakness; his vices were in abeyance.

The womanly nurse's heart yearned over her child; for he was feeble as a child; and, when he got well enough to amuse his weary hours by making love to her, and telling her a pack of arrant lies, she was a ready dupe. He was to marry her as soon as ever his old uncle died, and left him the means, etc., etc. At last he got well enough to leave her, and went away, her open admirer and secret lover. He borrowed twenty pounds of her the day he left.

He used to write her charming letters, and feed the flame; but one day her father sent her up to London, on

his own business, all of a sudden, and she called on Mr. Falcon at his real address. She found he did not live there — only received letters. However, half-a-crown soon bought his real address, and thither Phœbe proceeded with a troubled heart, for she suspected that her true lover was in debt or trouble, and obliged to hide. Well, he must be got out of it, and hide at the farm meantime.

So the loving girl knocked at the door, asked for Mr. Falcon, and was shown in to a lady rather showily dressed, who asked her business.

Phœbe Dale stared at her, and then turned pale as ashes. She was paralyzed, and could not find her tongue.

"Why, what is the matter now?" said the other, sharply.

"Are you married to Reginald Falcon?"

"Of course I am. Look at my wedding-ring."

"Then I am not wanted here," faltered Phœbe, ready to sink on the floor.

"Certainly not, if you are one of the bygones," said the woman, coarsely; and Phœbe Dale waited to hear no more, but found her way, Heaven knows how, into the street, and there leaned, half-fainting, on a rail, till a policeman came, and told her she had been drinking, and suggested a cool cell as the best cure.

"Not drink; only a breaking heart," said she, in her low, mellow voice that few could resist.

He got her a glass of water, drove away the boys that congregated directly, and she left the street. But she soon came back again, and waited about for Reginald Falcon.

It was night when he appeared. She seized him by the breast, and taxed him with his villany.

What with her iron grasp, pale face, and flashing eyes, he lost his cool impudence, and blurted out excuses. It

was an old and unfortunate connection; he would give the world to dissolve it, if he could do it like a gentleman.

Phœbe told him to please himself: he must part with one or the other.

"Don't talk nonsense," said this man of brass; "I'll un-Falcon her on the spot."

"Very well," said Phœbe. "I am going home; and, if you are not there by to-morrow at noon"— She said no more, but looked a great deal. Then she departed, and refused him her hand at parting. "We will see about that by and by," said she.

At noon my lord came down to the farm, and, unfortunately for Phœbe, played the penitent so skilfully for about a month, that she forgave him, and loved him all the more for having so nearly parted with him.

Her peace was not to endure long. He was detected in an intrigue in the very village.

The insult struck so home that Phœbe herself, to her parents' satisfaction, ordered him out of the house at once.

But, when he was gone, she had fits of weeping, and could settle to nothing for a long time.

Months had elapsed, and she was getting a sort of dull tranquillity, when, one evening, taking a walk she had often with him, and mourning her solitude and wasted affection, he waylaid her, and clung to her knees, and shed crocodile tears on her hands, and, after a long resistance, violent at first, but fainter and fainter, got her in his power again, and that so completely that she met him several times by night, being ashamed to be seen with him in those parts by day.

This ended in fresh promises of marriage, and in a constant correspondence by letter. This pest knew exactly how to talk to a woman, and how to write to one. His letters fed the unhappy flame; and, mind you, he

sometimes deceived himself, and thought he loved her; but it was only himself he loved. She was an invaluable lover; a faithful, disinterested friend; hers was a vile bargain; his, an excellent one, and he clung to it.

And so they went on. She detected him in another infidelity, and reproached him bitterly; but she had no longer the strength to break with him. Nevertheless, this time she had the sense to make a struggle. She implored him, on her very knees, to show her a little mercy in return for all her love. "For pity's sake, leave me!" she cried. "You are strong, and I am weak. You can end it forever, and pray do. You don't want me; you don't value me: then, leave me, once and for all, and end this hell you keep me in."

No; he could not, or he would not, leave her alone. Look at a bird's wings! — how like an angel's! Yet so vile a thing as a bit of birdlime subdues them utterly; and such was the fascinating power of this mean man over this worthy woman. She was a reader, a thinker, a model of respectability, industry, and sense; a business-woman, keen and practical; could encounter sharp hands in sharp trades; could buy or sell hogs, calves, or beasts with any farmer or butcher in the country, yet no match for a cunning fool. She had enshrined an idol in her heart, and that heart adored it, and clung to it, though the superior head saw through it, dreaded it, despised it.

No wonder three years of this had drawn a tell-tale wrinkle across the polished brow.

Phœbe Dale had not received a letter for some days; that roused her suspicion and stung her jealousy; she came up to London by fast train, and down to Gravesend directly.

She had a thick veil that concealed her features; and with a little inquiring and bribing, she soon found out

that Mr. Falcon was there with a showy dogcart. "Ah!" thought Phœbe, "he has won a little money at play or pigeon-shooting; so now he has no need of me."

She took the lodgings opposite him, but observed nothing till this very morning, when she saw him throw off his dressing-gown all in a hurry and fling on his coat. She tied on her bonnet as rapidly, and followed him, until she discovered the object of his pursuit. It was a surprise to her, and a puzzle, to see another man step in, as if to take her part. But as Reginald still followed the loitering pair, she followed Reginald, till he turned and found her at his heels, white and lowering.

She confronted him in threatening silence for some time, during which he prepared his defence.

"So it is a *lady* this time," said she, in her low, rich voice, sternly.

"Is it?"

"Yes, and I should say she is bespoke—that tall, fine-built gentleman. But I suppose you care no more for his feelings than you do for mine."

"Phœbe," said the egotist, "I will not try to deceive you. You have often said you are my true friend."

"And I think I have proved it."

"That you have. Well, then, be my true friend now. I am in love—really in love—this time. You and I only torment each other; let us part friends. There are plenty of farmers in Essex that would jump at you. As for me, I'll tell you the truth; I have run through every farthing; my estate mortgaged beyond its value—two or three writs out against me—that is why I slipped down here. My only chance is to marry Money. Her father knows I have land, and he knows nothing about the mortgages; she is his only daughter. Don't stand in my way, that is a good girl; be my friend, as you always were. Hang it all, Phœbe, can't you say a word to a

fellow that is driven into a corner, instead of glaring at me like that? There! I know it is ungrateful; but what can a fellow do? I must live like a gentleman or else take a dose of prussic acid; you don't want to drive me to that. Why, you proposed to part, last time, yourself."

She gave him one majestic, indescribable look, that made even his callous heart quiver, and turned away.

Then the scamp admired her for despising him, and could not bear to lose her. He followed her, and put forth all those powers of persuading and soothing, which had so often proved irresistible. But this time it was in vain. The insult was too savage, and his egotism too brutal, for honeyed phrases to blind her.

After enduring it a long time with a silent shudder, she turned and shook him fiercely off her like some poisonous reptile.

"Do you want me to kill you? I'd liever kill myself for loving such a thing as *thou*. Go thy ways, man, and let me go mine." In her passion she dropped her cultivation for once, and went back to the *thou* and *thee* of her grandam.

He colored up and looked spiteful enough; but he soon recovered his cynical egotism, and went off whistling an operatic passage.

She crept to her lodgings, and buried her face in her pillow, and rocked herself to and fro for hours in the bitterest agony the heart can feel, groaning over her great affection wasted, flung into the dirt.

While she was thus, she heard a little commotion. She came to the window and saw Falcon, exquisitely dressed, drive off in his dogcart, attended by the acclamations of eight boys. She saw at a glance he was gone courting; her knees gave way under her, and, such is the power of the mind, this stalwart girl lay weak as water on the sofa, and had not the power to go home,

though just then she had but one wish, one hope — to see her idol's face no more, nor hear his wheedling tongue, that had ruined her peace.

The exquisite Mr. Falcon was received by Rosa Lusignan with a certain tremor that flattered his hopes. He told her, in charming language, how he had admired her at first sight, then esteemed her, then loved her.

She blushed and panted, and showed more than once a desire to interrupt him, but was too polite. She heard him out with rising dismay, and he offered her his hand and heart.

But by this time she had made up her mind what to say. "O Mr. Falcon!" she cried, "how can you speak to me in this way? Why, I am engaged. Didn't you know?"

"No; I am sure you are not, or you would never have given me the encouragement you have."

"Oh, all engaged young ladies flirt — a little; and everybody here knows I am engaged to Dr. Staines."

"Why, I never saw him here."

Rosa's tact was a quality that came and went; so she blushed, and faltered out, "We had a little tiff, as lovers will."

"And you did me the honor to select me as cat's-paw to bring him on again. Was not that rather heartless?"

Rosa's fitful tact returned to her.

"Oh, sir, do not think so ill of me. I am not heartless, I am only unwise; and you are so superior to the people about you; I could not help appreciating you, and I thought you knew I was engaged, and so I was less on my guard. I hope I shall not lose your esteem, though I have no right to anything more. Ah! I see by your face I have behaved very ill: pray forgive me."

And with this she turned on the waters of the Nile, better known to you, perhaps, as "crocodile tears."

Falcon was a gentleman on the surface, and knew he should only make matters worse by quarrelling with her. So he ground his teeth, and said, "May your own heart never feel the pangs you have inflicted. I shall love you and remember you till my dying day."

He bowed ceremoniously and left her.

"Ay," said he to himself, "I *will* remember you, you heartless jilt, and the man you have jilted me for. Staines is his d——d name, is it?"

He drove back crestfallen, bitter, and, for once in his life, heart-sick, and drew up at his lodgings. Here he found attendants waiting to receive him.

A sheriff's officer took his dogcart and horse under a judgment; the disturbance this caused collected a tiny crowd, gaping and grinning, and brought Phœbe's white face and eyes swollen with weeping to the window.

Falcon saw her and brazened it out. "Take them," said he, with an oath. "I'll have a better turn-out by to-morrow, breakfast-time."

The crowd cheered him for his spirit.

He got down, lit a cigar, chaffed the officer and the crowd, and was, on the whole, admired.

Then another officer, who had been hunting him in couples with the other, stepped forward and took *him*, for the balance of a judgment debt.

Then the swell's cigar fell out of his mouth, and he was seriously alarmed. "Why, Cartwright," said he, "this is too bad. You promised not to see me this month. You passed me full in the Strand."

"You are mistaken, sir," said Cartwright, with sullen irony. "I've got a twin-brother; a many takes him for me, till they finds the difference." Then, lowering his voice, "What call had you to boast in your club you had made it right with Bill Cartwright, and he'd never see you? That got about, and so I was bound to see you or

lose my bread. There's one or two I don't see, but then they are real gentlemen, and thinks of me as well as theirselves, and doesn't blab."

"I must have been drunk," said Falcon apologetically.

"More likely blowing a cloud. When you young gents gets a-smoking together, you'd tell on your own mothers. Come along, colonel, off we go to Merrimashee."

"Why, it is only twenty-six pounds. I have paid the rest."

"More than that; there's the costs."

"Come in, and I'll settle it."

"All right, sir. Jem, watch the back."

"Oh, I shall not try that game with a sharp hand like you, Cartwright."

"You had better not, sir," said Cartwright; but he was softened a little by the compliment.

When they were alone, Falcon began by saying it was a bad job for him.

"Why, I thought you was a-going to pay it all in a moment."

"I can't; but I have got a friend over the way that could, if she chose. She has always got money, somehow."

"Oh, if it is a she, it is all right."

"I don't know. She has quarrelled with me; but give me a little time. Here! have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, while I try it on."

Having thus muffled Cartwright, this man of the world opened his window and looked out. The crowd had followed the captured dogcart, so he had the street to himself. He beckoned to Phœbe, and after considerable hesitation she opened her window.

"Phœbe," said he, in tones of tender regret, admirably natural and sweet, "I shall never offend you again; so forgive me this once. I have given that girl up."

"Not you," said Phœbe, sullenly.

"Indeed I have. After our quarrel, I started to propose to her; but I had not the heart; I came back and left her."

"Time will show. If it is not her, it will be some other, you false, heartless villain."

"Come, I say, don't be so hard on me in trouble. I am going to prison."

"So I suppose."

"Ah! but it is worse than you think. I am only taken for a paltry thirty pounds or so."

"Thirty-three, fifteen, five," suggested Cartwright, in a muffled whisper, his mouth being full of biscuit.

"But once they get me to a sponging-house, detainers will pour in, and my cruel creditors will confine me for life."

"It is the best place for you. It will put a stop to your wickedness, and I shall be at peace. That's what I have never known, night or day, this three years."

"But you will not be happy if you see me go to prison before your eyes. Were you ever inside a prison? Just think what it must be to be cooped up in those cold grim cells all alone; for they use a debtor like a criminal now."

Phœbe shuddered; but she said, bravely, "Well, tell *them* you have been a-courting. There was a time I'd have died sooner than see a hair of your head hurt; but it is all over now; you have worn me out."

Then she began to cry.

Falcon heaved a deep sigh. "It is no more than I deserve," said he. "I'll pack up my things, and go with the officer. Give me one kind word at parting, and I'll think of it in my prison, night and day."

He withdrew from the window with another deep sigh, told Cartwright, cheerfully, it was all right, and proceeded to pack up his traps.

Meantime Phœbe sat at her window and cried bitterly. Her words had been braver than her heart.

Falcon managed to pay the trifle he owed for the lodgings, and presently he came out with Cartwright, and the attendant called a cab. His things were thrown in, and Cartwright invited him to follow. Then he looked up, and cast a genuine look of terror and misery at Phœbe. He thought she would have relented before this.

Her heart gave way; I am afraid it would, even without that piteous and mute appeal. She opened the window, and asked Mr. Cartwright if he would be good enough to come and speak to her.

Cartwright committed his prisoner to the subordinate, and knocked at the door of Phœbe's lodgings. She came down herself and let him in. She led the way upstairs, motioned him to a seat, sat down by him, and began to cry again. She was thoroughly unstrung.

Cartwright was human, and muttered some words of regret that a poor fellow must do his duty.

"Oh, it is not that," sobbed Phœbe. "I can find the money. I have found more for him than that, many's the time." Then, drying her eyes, "But you must know the world, and I dare say you can see how 'tis with me."

"I can," said Cartwright, gravely. "I overheard you and him; and, my girl, if you take my advice, why, let him go. He is a gentleman skin deep, and dresses well, and can palaver a girl, no doubt; but bless your heart, I can see at a glance he is not worth your little finger, an honest, decent young woman like you. Why, it is like butter fighting with stone. Let him go; or I will tell you what it is, you will hang for him some day, or else make away with yourself."

"Ay, sir," said Phœbe, "that's likelier; and if I was to let him go to prison, I should sit me down and think

of his parting look, and I should fling myself into the water for him before I was a day older."

"Ye mustn't do that anyway. While there's life there's hope."

Upon this Phœbe put him a question, and found him ready to do anything for her, in reason — provided he was paid for it. And the end of it all was, the prisoner was conveyed to London; Phœbe got the requisite sum; Falcon was deposited in a third-class carriage bound for Essex. Phœbe paid his debt, and gave Cartwright a present, and away rattled the train conveying the handsome egotist into temporary retirement, to wit, at a village five miles from the Dales' farm. She was too ashamed of her young gentleman and herself to be seen with him in her native village. On the road down he was full of little practical attentions; she received them coldly; his mellifluous mouth was often at her ear, pouring thanks and praises into it; she never vouchsafed a word of reply. All she did was to shudder now and then, and cry at intervals. Yet, whenever he left her side, her whole body became restless; and when he came back to her, a furtive thrill announced the insane complacency his bare contact gave her. Surely, of all the forms in which love torments the heart, this was the most terrible and pitiable.

Mr. Lusignan found his daughter in tears.

"Why, what is the matter now?" said he, a little peevishly. "We have had nothing of this sort of thing lately."

"Papa, it is because I have misconducted myself. I am a foolish, imprudent girl. I have been flirting with Mr. Falcon, and he has taken a *cruel* advantage of it — proposed to me — this very afternoon — actually!"

"Has he? Well, he is a fine fellow, and has a landed

estate in Norfolk. There's nothing like land. They may well call it real property — there is something to show; you can walk on it, and ride on it, and look out of window at it: that *is* property."

"Oh, papa! what are you saying? Would you have me marry one man when I belong to another?"

"But you don't belong to any one except to me."

"Oh, yes; I do. I belong to my dear Christopher."

"Why, you dismissed him before my very eyes; and very ill you behaved, begging your pardon. The man was your able physician and your best friend, and said nothing that was not for your good; and you treated him like a dog."

"Yes, but he has apologized."

"What for? being treated like a dog?"

"Oh, don't say so, papa! At all events, he has apologized, as a gentleman should whenever — whenever" —

"Whenever a lady is in the wrong."

"Don't, papa; and I have asked him to dinner."

"With all my heart. I shall be downright glad to see him again. You used him abominably."

"But you need not keep saying so," whined Rosa. "And that is not all, dear papa; the worst of it is, Mr. Falcon proposing to me has opened my eyes. I am not fit to be trusted alone. I am too fond of dancing, and flirting will follow somehow. Oh, think how ill I was a few months ago, and how unhappy you were about me! They were killing me. He came and saved me. Yes, papa, I owe all this health and strength to Christopher. I did take them off, the very next day, and see the effect of it and my long walks. I owe him my life, and what I value far more, my good looks. La! I wish I had not told you that. And after all this, don't I belong to my Christopher? How could I be happy or respect myself

if I married any one else? And oh, papa! he looks wan and worn. He has been fretting for his Simpleton. Oh, dear! I mustn't think of that — it makes me cry; and you don't like scenes, do you?"

"Hate 'em!"

"Well, then," said Rosa, coaxingly, "I'll tell you how to end them. Marry your Simpleton to the only man who is fit to take care of her. Oh, papa! think of his deep, deep affection for me, and pray don't snub him if — by any chance — after dinner — he should *happen* to ask you — something."

"Oh, then it is possible that, by the merest chance, the gentleman you have accidentally asked to dinner, may, by some strange fortuity, be surprised into asking me a second time for something very much resembling my daughter's hand — eh?"

Rosa colored high. "He might, you know. How can I tell what gentlemen will say when the ladies have retired and they are left alone with — with" —

"With the bottle. Ay, that's true; when the wine is in, the wit is out."

Said Rosa, "Well, if he should happen to be so foolish, pray think of *me;* of all we owe him, and how much I love him, and ought to love him." She then bestowed a propitiatory kiss, and ran off to dress for dinner; it was a much longer operation to-day than usual.

Dr. Staines was punctual. Mr. Lusignan commented favorably on that.

"He always is," said Rosa, eagerly.

They dined together. Mr. Lusignan chatted freely, but Staines and Rosa were under a feeling of restraint, Staines in particular; he could not help feeling that before long his fate must be settled. He would either obtain Rosa's hand, or have to resign her to some man of fortune who would step in; for beauty such as hers

could not long lack brilliant offers. Longing, though dreading, to know his fate, he was glad when dinner ended.

Rosa sat with them a little while after dinner, then rose, bestowed another propitiatory kiss on her father's head, and retired with a modest blush, and a look at Christopher that was almost divine.

It inspired him with the courage of lions, and he commenced the attack at once.

CHAPTER V.

"Mr. Lusignan," said he, "the last time I was here you gave me some hopes that you might be prevailed on to trust that angel's health and happiness to my care."

"Well, Dr. Staines, I will not beat about the bush with you. My judgment is still against this marriage; you need not look so alarmed; it does not follow I shall forbid it. I feel I have hardly a right to, for my Rosa might be in her grave now but for you; and, another thing, when I interfered between you two I had no proof you were a man of ability; I had only your sweetheart's word for that; and I never knew a case before where a young lady's swan did not turn out a goose. Your rare ability gives you another chance in the professional battle that is before you; indeed, it puts a different face on the whole matter. I still think it premature. Come now, would it not be much wiser to wait, and secure a good practice before you marry a mere child? There! there! I only advise; I don't dictate; you shall settle it together, you two wiseacres. Only I must make one positive condition. I have nothing to give my child during my lifetime; but one thing I have done for her; years ago I insured my life for six thousand pounds; and you must do the same. I will not have her thrown on the world a widow, with a child or two, perhaps, to support, and not a farthing; you know the insecurity of mortal life."

"I do! I do! Why, of course I will insure my life, and pay the annual premium out of my little capital, until income flows in."

"Will you hand me over a sum sufficient to pay that premium for five years?"

"With pleasure."

"Then I fear," said the old gentleman, with a sigh, "my opposition to the match must cease here. I still recommend you to wait; but — there! I might just as well advise fire and tow to live neighbors and keep cool."

To show the injustice of this simile, Christopher Staines started up with his eyes all aglow, and cried out, rapturously, "Oh, sir, may I tell her?"

"Yes, you may tell her," said Lusignan, with a smile. "Stop — what are you going to tell her?"

"That you consent, sir. God bless you! God bless you! Oh!"

"Yes, but that I advise you to wait."

"I'll tell her all," said Staines, and rushed out even as he spoke, and upset a heavy chair with a loud thud.

"Ah! ah!" cried the old gentleman in dismay, and put his fingers in his ears — too late. "I see," said he, "there will be no peace and quiet now till they are out of the house." He lighted a soothing cigar to counteract the fracas.

"Poor little Rosa! a child but yesterday, and now to encounter the cares of a wife, and perhaps a mother. Ah! she is but young, but young."

The old gentleman prophesied truly; from that moment he had no peace till he withdrew all semblance of dissent, and even of procrastination.

Christopher insured his life for six thousand pounds, and assigned the policy to his wife. Four hundred pounds was handed to Mr. Lusignan to pay the premiums until the genius of Dr. Staines should have secured him that large professional income, which does not come all at once, even to the rare physician, who is Capax, Efficax, Sagax.

The wedding-day was named. The bridesmaids were selected, the guests invited. None refused but Uncle Philip. He declined, in his fine bold hand, to countenance in person an act of folly he disapproved. Christopher put his letter away with a momentary sigh, and would not show it Rosa. All other letters they read together, charming pastime of that happy period. Presents poured in. Silver teapots, coffeepots, sugar-basins, cream-jugs, fruit-dishes, silver-gilt inkstands, albums, photograph-books, little candlesticks, choice little services of china, shell salt-cellars in a case lined with maroon velvet; a Bible, superb in binding and clasps, and everything but the text — that was illegible; a silk scarf from Benares; a gold chain from Delhi, six feet long or nearly; a Maltese necklace, a ditto in exquisite filagree from Genoa; English brooches, a trifle too big and brainless; apostle spoons; a treble-lined parasol with ivory stick and handle; an ivory card-case, richly carved; workbox of sandal-wood and ivory, etc. Mr. Lusignan's City friends, as usual with these gentlemen, sent the most valuable things. Every day one or two packages were delivered, and, in opening them, Rosa invariably uttered a peculiar scream of delight, and her father put his fingers in his ears; yet there was music in this very scream, if he would only have listened to it candidly, instead of fixing his mind on his vague theory of screams — so formed was she to please the ear as well as the eye.

At last came a parcel she opened and stared at, smiling and coloring like a rose, but did not scream, being too dumfounded and perplexed; for lo! a teapot of some base material, but simple and elegant in form, being an exact reproduction of a melon; and inside this teapot a canvas bag containing ten guineas in silver, and a washleather bag containing twenty guineas in gold, and a slip of paper, which Rosa, being now half recovered

from her stupefaction, read out to her father and Dr. Staines:

"People that buy presents blindfold give duplicates and triplicates; and men seldom choose to a woman's taste; so be pleased to accept the enclosed tea-leaves, and buy for yourself. The teapot you can put on the hob, for it is nickel."

Rosa looked sore puzzled again. "Papa," said she, timidly, "have we any friend that is — a little — deranged?"

"A lot."

"Oh, then, that accounts."

"Why no, love," said Christopher. "I have heard of much learning making a man mad, but never of much good sense."

"What! Do you call this sensible?"

"Don't you?"

"I'll read it again," said Rosa. "Well — yes — I declare — it is not so mad as I thought; but it is very eccentric."

Lusignan suggested there was nothing so eccentric as common sense, especially in time of wedding. "This," said he, "comes from the City. It is a friend of mine, some old fox; he is throwing dust in your eyes with his reasons; his real reason was that his time is money; it would have cost the old rogue a hundred pounds' worth of time — you know the City, Christopher — to go out and choose the girl a present; so he has sent his clerk out with a check to buy a pewter teapot, and fill it with specie."

"Pewter!" cried Rosa. "No such thing! It's nickel. What is nickel, I wonder?"

The handwriting afforded no clew, so there the discussion ended: but it was a nice little mystery, and very

convenient; made conversation. Rosa had many an animated discussion about it with her female friends.

The wedding-day came at last. The sun shone — *actually*, as Rosa observed. The carriages drove up. The bridesmaids, principally old schoolfellows and impassioned correspondents of Rosa, were pretty, and dressed alike and delightfully; but the bride was peerless; her Southern beauty literally shone in that white satin dress and veil, and her head was regal with the crown of orange-blossoms. Another crown she had — true virgin modesty. A low murmur burst from the men the moment they saw her; the old women forgave her beauty on the spot, and the young women almost pardoned it; she was so sweet and womanly, and so sisterly to her own sex.

When they started for the church she began to tremble, she scarce knew why; and when the solemn words were said, and the ring was put on her finger, she cried a little, and looked half imploringly at her bridesmaids once, as if scared at leaving them for an untried and mysterious life with no woman near.

They were married. Then came the breakfast, that hour of uneasiness and blushing to such a bride as this; but at last she was released. She sped up-stairs, thanking goodness it was over. Down came her last box. The bride followed in a plain travelling dress, which her glorious eyes and brows and her rich glowing cheeks seemed to illumine: she was handed into the carriage, the bridegroom followed. All the young guests clustered about the door, armed with white shoes — slippers are gone by.

They started; the ladies flung their white shoes right and left with religious impartiality, except that not one of their missiles went at the object. The men, more skilful, sent a shower on to the roof of the carriage,

which is the lucky spot. The bride kissed her hand, and managed to put off crying, though it cost her a struggle. The party hurrahed; enthusiastic youths gathered fallen shoes, and ran and hurled them again with cheerful yells, and away went the happy pair, the bride leaning sweetly and confidingly with both her white hands on the bridegroom's shoulder, while he dried the tears that would run now at leaving home and parent forever, and kissed her often, and encircled her with his strong arm, and murmured comfort, and love, and pride, and joy, and sweet vows of lifelong tenderness into her ears, that soon stole nearer his lips to hear, and the fair cheek grew softly to his shoulder.

CHAPTER VI.

Dr. Staines and Mrs. Staines visited France, Switzerland, and the Rhine, and passed a month of Elysium before they came to London to face their real destiny and fight the battle of life.

And here, methinks, a reader of novels may perhaps cry out and say, "What manner of man is this, who marries his hero and heroine, and then, instead of leaving them happy for life, and at rest from his uneasy pen and all their other troubles, flows coolly on with their adventures?"

To this I can only reply that the old English novel is no rule to me, and life is; and I respectfully propose an experiment. Catch eight old married people, four of each sex, and say unto them, "Sir," or "Madam, did the more remarkable events of your life come to you before marriage or after?" Most of them will say "after," and let that be my excuse for treating the marriage of Christopher Staines and Rosa Lusignan as merely one incident in their lives; an incident which, so far from ending their story, led by degrees to more striking events than any that occurred to them before they were man and wife.

They returned, then, from their honey tour, and Staines, who was methodical and kept a diary, made the following entry therein: —

"We have now a life of endurance, and self-denial, and economy, before us; we have to rent a house, and furnish it, and live in it, until professional income shall flow in and make all things easy: and we have two thousand five hundred pounds left to do it with."

They came to a family hotel, and Dr. Staines went out directly after breakfast to look for a house. Acting on a friend's advice, he visited the streets and places north of Oxford Street, looking for a good commodious house adapted to his business. He found three or four at fair rents, neither cheap nor dear, the district being respectable and rather wealthy, but no longer fashionable. He came home with his notes, and found Rosa beaming in a crisp *peignoir*, and her lovely head its natural size and shape, high-bred and elegant. He sat down, and with her hand in his proceeded to describe the houses to her, when a waiter threw open the door — "Mrs. John Cole."

"Florence!" cried Rosa, starting up.

In flowed Florence: they both uttered a little squawk of delight, and went at each other like two little tigresses, and kissed in swift alternation with a singular ardor, drawing their crests back like snakes, and then darting them forward and inflicting what, to the male philosopher looking on, seemed hard kisses, violent kisses, rather than the tender ones to be expected from two tender creatures embracing each other.

"Darling," said Rosa, "I knew you would be the first. Didn't I tell you so, Christopher? — My husband — my darling Florry! Sit down, love, and tell me everything; he has just been looking out for a house. Ah! you have got all that over long ago: she has been married six months. Florry, you are handsomer than ever; and what a beautiful dress! Ah! London is the place. Real Brussels, I declare," and she took hold of her friend's lace and gloated on it.

Christopher smiled good-naturedly, and said, "I dare say you ladies have a good deal to say to each other."

"Oceans," said Rosa.

"I will go and hunt houses again."

"There's a good husband," said Mrs. Cole, as soon as the door closed on him, "and such a fine man! Why, he must be six feet. Mine is rather short. But he is very good; refuses me nothing. My will is law."

"That is all right — you are so sensible; but I want governing a little, and I like it — actually. Did the dressmaker find it, dear?"

"Oh, no! I had it by me. I bought it at Brussels on our wedding tour: it is dearer there than in London."

She said this as if "dearer" and "better" were synonymous.

"But about your house, Rosie dear?"

"Yes, darling, I'll tell you all about it. I never saw a moiré this shade before. I don't care for them in general; but this is so *distingué*."

Florence rewarded her with a kiss.

"The house," said Rosa. "Oh, he has seen one in Portman Street, and one in Gloucester Place."

"Oh, that will never do," cried Mrs. Cole. "It is no use being a physician in those out-of-the-way places. He must be in Mayfair."

"Must he?"

"Of course. Besides, then my Johnnie can call him in when they are just going to die. Johnnie is a general prac., and makes two thousand a year; and he shall call your one in; but he must live in Mayfair. Why, Rosie, you would not be such a goose as to live in those places — they are quite gone by."

"I shall do whatever you advise me, dear. Oh, what a comfort to have a dear friend: and six months married, and knows things. How richly it is trimmed! Why, it is nearly all trimmings."

"That is the fashion."

"Oh!"

And after that big word there was no more to be said.

These two ladies in their conversation gravitated towards dress, and fell flat on it every half-minute. That great and elevating topic held them by a silken cord, but it allowed them to flutter upwards into other topics; and in those intervals, numerous though brief, the lady who had been married six months found time to instruct the matrimonial novice with great authority, and even a shade of pomposity. "My dear, the way ladies and gentlemen get a house — in the first place, you don't go about yourself like that, and you never go to the people themselves, or you are sure to be taken in, but to a respectable house-agent."

"Yes, dear, that must be the best way, one would think."

"Of course it is; and you ask for a house in Mayfair, and he shows you several, and recommends you the best, and sees you are not cheated."

"Thank you, love," said Rosa; "now I know what to do; I'll not forget a word. And the train so beautifully shaped! Ah! it is only in London or Paris they can make a dress flow behind like that," etc., etc.

Dr. Staines came back to dinner in good spirits; he had found a house in Harewood Square; good entrance-hall, where his gratuitous patients might sit on benches; good dining-room where his superior patients might wait; and good library, to be used as a consulting-room. Rent only eighty-five pounds per annum.

But Rosa told him that would never do; a physician must be in the fashionable part of the town.

"Eventually," said Christopher; "but surely at first starting — and you know they say little boats should not go too far from shore."

Then Rosa repeated all her friend's arguments, and seemed so unhappy at the idea of not living near her, that Staines, who had not yet said the hard word "no"

to her, gave in; consoling his prudence with the reflection that, after all, Mr. Cole could put many a guinea in his way, for Mr. Cole was middle-aged, — though his wife was young, — and had really a very large practice.

So next day, the newly-wedded pair called on a house-agent in Mayfair, and his son and partner went with them to several places. The rents of houses equal to that in Harewood Square were three hundred pounds a year at least, and a premium to boot.

Christopher told him these were quite beyond the mark. "Very well," said the agent. "Then I'll show you a Bijou."

Rosa clapped her hands. "That is the thing for us. We don't want a large house, only a beautiful one, and in Mayfair."

"Then the Bijou will be sure to suit you."

He took them to the Bijou.

The Bijou had a small dining-room with one very large window in two sheets of plate glass, and a projecting balcony full of flowers; a still smaller library, which opened on a square yard enclosed. Here were a great many pots, with flowers dead or dying from neglect. On the first floor a fair-sized drawing-room, and a tiny one at the back: on the second floor, one good bedroom, and a dressing-room, or little bedroom: three garrets above.

Rosa was in ecstasies. "It is a nest," said she.

"It is a bank-note," said the agent, stimulating equal enthusiasm, after his fashion. "You can always sell the lease again for more money."

Christopher kept cool. "I don't want a house to sell, but to live in, and do my business; I am a physician: now the drawing-room is built over the entrance to a mews; the back rooms all look into a mews: we shall have the eternal noise and smell of a mews. My wife's

rest will be broken by the carriages rolling in and out. The hall is fearfully small and stuffy. The rent is abominably high; and what is the premium for, I wonder?"

"Always a premium in Mayfair, sir. A lease is property here: the gentleman is not acquainted with this part, madam."

"Oh, yes, he is," said Rosa, as boldly as a six years' wife: "he knows everything."

"Then he knows that a house of this kind at a hundred and thirty pounds a year in Mayfair is a bank-note."

Staines turned to Rosa. "The poor patients, where am I to receive them?"

"In the stable," suggested the house agent.

"Oh!" said Rosa, shocked.

"Well, then, the coach-house. Why, there's plenty of room for a brougham, and one horse, and fifty poor patients at a time: beggars musn't be choosers; if you give them physic gratis, that is enough: you ain't bound to find 'em a palace to sit down in, and hot coffee and rump steaks all round, doctor."

This tickled Rosa so that she burst out laughing, and thenceforward giggled at intervals, wit of this refined nature having all the charm of novelty for her.

They inspected the stables, which were indeed the one redeeming feature in the horrid little Bijou; and then the agent would show them the kitchen, and the new stove. He expatiated on this to Mrs. Staines. "Cook a dinner for thirty people, madam."

"And there's room for them to eat it — in the road," said Staines.

The agent reminded him there were larger places to be had, by a very simple process, viz., paying for them.

Staines thought of the large, comfortable house in

Harewood Square. "One hundred and thirty pounds a year for this poky little hole?" he groaned.

"Why, it is nothing at all for a Bijou."

"But it is too much for a bandbox."

Rosa laid her hand on his arm, with an imploring glance.

"Well," said he, "I'll submit to the rent, but I really cannot give the premium, it is too ridiculous. He ought to bribe me to rent it, not I him."

"Can't be done without, sir."

"Well, I'll give a hundred pounds and no more."

"Impossible, sir."

"Then good morning. Now, dearest, just come and see the house at Harewood Square, — eighty-five pounds and no premium."

"Will you oblige me with your address, doctor?" said the agent.

"Dr. Staines, Morley's Hotel."

And so they left Mayfair.

Rosa sighed and said, "Oh, the nice little place; and we have lost it for two hundred pounds."

"Two hundred pounds is a great deal for us to throw away."

"Being near the Coles would soon have made that up to you: and such a cosey little nest."

"Well the house will not run away."

"But somebody is sure to snap it up. It is a Bijou." She was disappointed, and half inclined to pout. But she vented her feelings in a letter to her beloved Florry, and appeared at dinner as sweet as usual.

During dinner a note came from the agent, accepting Dr. Staine's offer. He glozed the matter thus: he had persuaded the owner it was better to take a good tenant at a moderate loss, than to let the Bijou be uninhabited during the present rainy season. An assignment of the

lease — which contained the usual covenants — would be prepared immediately, and Dr. Staines could have possession in forty-eight hours, by paying the premium.

Rosa was delighted, and as soon as dinner was over, and the waiters gone, she came and kissed Christopher.

He smiled, and said, "Well, you are pleased; that is the principal thing. I have saved two hundred pounds, and that is something. It will go towards furnishing."

"La! yes," said Rosa, "I forgot. We shall have to get furniture now. How nice!" It was a pleasure the man of forecast could have willingly dispensed with; but he smiled at her, and they discussed furniture, and Christopher, whose retentive memory had picked up a little of everything, said there were wholesale upholsterers in the City who sold cheaper than the West-end houses, and he thought the best way was to measure the rooms in the Bijou, and go to the city with a clear idea of what they wanted; ask the prices of various necessary articles, and then make a list, and demand a discount of fifteen per cent on the whole order, being so considerable, and paid for in cash.

Rosa acquiesced, and told Christopher he was the cleverest man in England.

About nine o'clock Mrs. Cole came in to condole with her friend, and heard the good news. When Rosa told her how they thought of furnishing, she said, "Oh no, you must not do that; you will pay double for everything. That is the mistake Johnnie and I made; and after that a friend of mine took me to the auction-rooms, and I saw everything sold — oh, such bargains; half, and less than half, their value. She has furnished her house almost entirely from sales, and she has the loveliest things in the world — such ducks of tables, and *jardinières*, and things; and beautiful rare china — her

house swarms with it — for an old song. A sale is the place. And then so amusing."

"Yes, but," said Christopher, "I should not like my wife to encounter a public room."

"Not alone, of course; but with me. La! Dr. Staines, they are too full of buying and selling to trouble their heads about us."

"Oh, Christopher, do let me go with her. Am I always to be a child?"

Thus appealed to before a stranger, Staines replied warmly, "No, dearest, no; you cannot please me better than by beginning life in earnest. If you two ladies together can face an auction-room, go by all means; only I must ask you not to buy china or ormulu, or anything that will break or spoil, but only solid, good furniture."

"Won't you come with us?"

"No; or you might feel yourself in leading-strings. Remember the Bijou is a small house; choose your furniture to fit it, and then we shall save something by its being so small."

This was Wednesday. There was a weekly sale in Oxford Street on Fridays; and the ladies made the appointment accordingly.

Next day, after breakfast, Christopher was silent and thoughtful awhile, and at last said to Rosa, "I'll show you I don't look on you as a child; I'll consult you in a delicate matter."

Rosa's eyes sparkled.

"It is about my Uncle Philip. He has been very cruel; he has wounded me deeply; he has wounded me through my wife. I never thought he would refuse to come to our marriage."

"And did he? You never showed me his letter."

"You were not my wife then. I kept an affront from you; but now, you see, I keep nothing."

"Dear Christie!"

"I am so happy, I have got over that sting — almost; and the memory of many kind acts comes back to me; and I don't know what to do. It seems ungrateful not to visit him — it seems almost mean to call."

"I'll tell you; take me to see him directly. He won't hate us forever, if he sees us often. We may as well begin at once. Nobody hates me long."

Christopher was proud of his wife's courage and wisdom. He kissed her, begged her to put on the plainest dress she could, and they went together to call on Uncle Philip.

When they got to his house in Gloucester Place, Portman Square, Rosa's heart began to quake, and she was right glad when the servant said "Not at home."

They left their cards and address; and she persuaded Christopher to take her to the sale-room to see the things.

A lot of brokers were there, like vultures; and one after another stepped forward and pestered them to employ him in the morning. Dr. Staines declined their services civilly but firmly, and he and Rosa looked over a quantity of furniture, and settled what sort of things to buy.

Another broker came up, and whenever the couple stopped before an article, proceeded to praise it as something most extraordinary. Staines listened in cold, satirical silence, and told his wife, in French, to do the same. Notwithstanding their marked disgust, the impudent, intrusive fellow stuck to them, and forced his venal criticism on them, and made them uncomfortable, and shortened their tour of observation.

"I think I shall come with you to-morrow," said Christopher, "or I shall have these blackguards pestering you."

"Oh, Florry will send them to the right-about. She is as brave as a lion."

Next day Dr. Staines was sent for into the City at twelve to pay the money and receive the lease of the Bijou, and this and the taking possession occupied him till four o'clock, when he came to his hotel.

Meantime, his wife and Mrs. Cole had gone to the auction-room.

It was a large room, with a good sprinkling of people, but not crowded except about the table. At the head of this table — full twenty feet long — was the auctioneer's pulpit, and the lots were brought in turn to the other end of the table for sight and sale.

"We must try and get a seat," said the enterprising Mrs. Cole, and pushed boldly in; the timid Rosa followed strictly in her wake, and so evaded the human waves her leader clove. They were importuned at every step by brokers thrusting catalogues on them, with offers of their services, yet they soon got to the table. A gentleman resigned one chair, a broker another, and they were seated.

Mrs. Staines let down half her veil, but Mrs. Cole surveyed the company point-blank.

The broker who had given up his seat, and now stood behind Rosa, offered her his catalogue. "No, thank you," said Rosa; "I have one;" and she produced it, and studied it, yet managed to look furtively at the company.

There were not above a dozen private persons visible from where Rosa sat; perhaps as many more in the whole room. They were easily distinguishable by their cleanly appearance: the dealers, male or female, were more or less rusty, greasy, dirty, aquiline. Not even the amateurs were brightly dressed; that fundamental error was confined to Mesdames Cole and Staines. The experienced, however wealthy, do not hunt bargains in silk and satin.

The auctioneer called "Lot 7. Four saucepans, two trays, a kettle, a bootjack, and a towel-horse."

These were put up at two shillings, and speedily knocked down for five to a fat old woman in a greasy velvet jacket; blind industry had sewed bugles on it, not artfully, but agriculturally.

"The lady on the left!" said the auctioneer to his clerk. That meant "Get the money."

The old lady plunged a huge paw into a huge pocket, and pulled out a huge handful of coin — copper, silver, and gold — and paid for the lot; and Rosa surveyed her dirty hands and nails with innocent dismay. "Oh, what a dreadful creature!" she whispered; "and what can she want with those old rubbishy things? I saw a hole in one from here." The broker overheard, and said, "She is a dealer, ma'am, and the things were given away. She'll sell them for a guinea, easy."

"Didn't I tell you?" said Mrs. Cole.

Soon after this the superior lots came on, and six very neat bedroom chairs were sold to all appearance for fifteen shillings.

The next lot was identical, and Rosa hazarded a bid, — "Sixteen shillings."

Instantly some dealer, one of the hook-nosed that gathered round each lot as it came to the foot of the table, cried "Eighteen shillings."

"Nineteen," said Rosa.

"A guinea," said the dealer.

"Don't let it go," said the broker behind her. "Don't let it go, ma'am."

She colored at the intrusion, and left off bidding directly, and addressed herself to Mrs. Cole. "Why should I give so much, when the last were sold for fifteen shillings?"

The real reason was that the first lot was not bid for

at all, except by the proprietor. However, the broker gave her a very different solution; he said, "The trade always run up a lady or a gentleman. Let me bid for you; they won't run me up; they know better."

Rosa did not reply, but looked at Mrs. Cole.

"Yes, dear," said that lady; "you had much better let him bid for you."

"Very well," said Rosa; "you can bid for this chest of drawers — lot 25."

When lot 25 came on, the broker bid in the silliest possible way, if his object had been to get a bargain. He began to bid early and ostentatiously; the article was protected by somebody or other there present, who now of course saw his way clear; he ran it up audaciously, and it was purchased for Rosa at about the price it could have been bought for at a shop.

The next thing she wanted was a set of oak chairs.

They went up to twenty-eight pounds; then she said, "I shall give no more, sir."

"Better not lose them," said the agent; "they are a great bargain;" and bid another pound for her on his own responsibility.

They were still run up, and Rosa peremptorily refused to give any more. She lost them, accordingly, by good luck. Her faithful broker looked blank; so did the proprietor.

But, as the sale proceeded, she being young, the competition, though most of it sham, being artful and exciting, and the traitor she employed constantly puffing every article, she was drawn in to wishing for things, and bidding by her feelings.

Then her traitor played a game that has been played a hundred times, and the perpetrators never once lynched, as they ought to be, on the spot. He signalled a confederate with a hooked nose; the Jew rascal bid against

the Christian scoundrel, and so they ran up the more enticing things to twice their value under the hammer.

Rosa got flushed, and her eye gleamed like a gambler's, and she bought away like wildfire. In which sport she caught sight of an old gentleman, with little black eyes that kept twinkling at her.

She complained of these eyes to Mrs. Cole. "Why does he twinkle so? I can see it is at me. I am doing something foolish — I know I am."

Mrs. Cole turned, and fixed a haughty stare on the old gentleman. Would you believe it? instead of sinking through the floor, he sat his ground, and retorted with a cold, clear grin.

But now, whenever Rosa's agent bid for her, and the other man of straw against him, the black eyes twinkled, and Rosa's courage began to ooze away. At last she said, "That is enough for one day. I shall go. Who could bear those eyes?"

The broker took her address; so did the auctioneer's clerk. The auctioneer asked her for no deposit; her beautiful, innocent, and high-bred face was enough for a man who was always reading faces, and interpreting them.

And so they retired.

But this charming sex is like that same auctioneer's hammer, it cannot go abruptly. It is always going — going — going — a long time before it is gone. I think it would perhaps loiter at the door of a jail, with the order of release in its hand, after six years' confinement. Getting up to go quenches in it the desire to go. So these ladies having got up to go, turned and lingered, and hung fire so long, that at last another set of oak chairs came up. "Oh! I must see what these go for," said Rosa, at the door.

The bidding was mighty languid now Rosa's broker

was not stimulating it; and the auctioneer was just knocking down twelve chairs — oak and leather — and two arm-chairs, for twenty pounds, when, casting his eyes around, he caught sight of Rosa looking at him rather excited. He looked inquiringly at her. She nodded slightly; he knocked them down to her at twenty guineas, and they were really a great bargain.

"Twenty-two," cried the dealer.

"Too late," said the auctioneer.

"I spoke with the hammer, sir."

"After the hammer, Isaacs."

"Shelp me God, we was together."

One or two more of his tribe confirmed this pious falsehood, and clamored to have them put up again.

"Call the next lot," said the auctioneer, peremptorily. "Make up your mind a little quicker next time, Mr. Isaacs; you have been long enough at it to know the value of oak and moroccar."

Mrs. Staines and her friend now started for Morley's Hotel, but went round by Regent Street, whereby they got glued at Peter Robinson's window, and nine other windows; and it was nearly five o'clock when they reached Morley's. As they came near the door of their sitting-room, Mrs. Staines heard somebody laughing and talking to her husband. The laugh, to her subtle ears, did not sound musical and genial, but keen, satirical, unpleasant; so it was with some timidity she opened the door, and there sat the old chap with the twinkling eyes. Both parties stared at each other a moment.

"Why, it is them," cried the old gentleman. "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

Rosa colored all over, and felt guilty somehow, and looked miserable.

"Rosa dear," said Dr. Staines, "this is our Uncle Philip."

"Oh!" said Rosa, and turned red and pale by turns; for she had a great desire to propitiate Uncle Philip.

"You were in the auction-room, sir?" said Mrs. Cole, severely.

"I was, madam. He! he!"

"Furnishing a house?"

"No, ma'am. I go to a dozen sales a week; but it is not to buy — I enjoy the humors. Did you ever hear of Robert Burton, ma'am?"

"No. Yes; a great traveller, isn't he? Discovered the Nile — or the Niger — or *something?*"

This majestic vagueness staggered old Crusty at first, but he recovered his equilibrium, and said, "Why, yes, now I think of it, you are right; he has travelled farther than most of us, for about two centuries ago he visited that bourn whence no traveller returns. Well, when he was alive — he was a student of Christchurch — he used to go down to a certain bridge over the Isis and enjoy the chaff of the bargemen. Now there are no bargemen left to speak of; the mantle of Bobby Burton's bargees has fallen on the Jews and demi-semi-Christians that buy and sell furniture at the weekly auctions; thither I repair to hear what little coarse wit is left us. Used to go to the House of Commons; but they are getting too civil by half for my money. Besides, characters come out in an auction. For instance, only this very day I saw two ladies enter, in gorgeous attire, like heifers decked for sacrifice, and reduce their spoliation to a certainty by employing a broker to bid. Now, what is a broker? A fellow who is to be paid a shilling in the pound for all articles purchased. What is his interest, then? To buy cheap? Clearly not. He is paid in proportion to the dearness of the article."

Rosa's face began to work piteously.

"Accordingly, what did the broker in question do?

He winked to another broker, and these two bid against one another, over their victim's head, and ran everything she wanted up at least a hundred per cent above the value. So open and transparent a swindle I have seldom seen, even in an auction-room. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

His mirth was interrupted by Rosa going to her husband, hiding her head on his shoulder, and meekly crying.

Christopher comforted her like a man. "Don't you cry, darling," said he; "how should a pure creature like you know the badness of the world all in a moment? If it is my wife you are laughing at, Uncle Philip, let me tell you this is the wrong place. I'd rather a thousand times have her as she is, than armed with the cunning and suspicions of a hardened old worldling like you."

"With all my heart," said Uncle Philip, who, to do him justice, could take blows as well as give them; "but why employ a broker? Why pay a scoundrel five per cent to make you pay a hundred per cent? Why pay a noisy fool a farthing to open his mouth for you when you have taken the trouble to be there yourself, and have got a mouth of your own to bid discreetly with? Was ever such an absurdity?" He began to get angry.

"Do you want to quarrel with me, Uncle Philip?" said Christopher, firing up; "because sneering at my Rosa is the way, and the only way, and the sure way."

"Oh, no," said Rosa, interposing. "Uncle Philip was right. I am very foolish and inexperienced, but I am not so vain as to turn from good advice. I will never employ a broker again, sir."

Uncle Philip smiled and looked pleased.

Mrs. Cole caused a diversion by taking leave, and Rosa followed her down-stairs. On her return she found

Christopher telling his uncle all about the Bijou, and how he had taken it for a hundred and thirty pounds a year and a hundred pounds premium, and Uncle Philip staring fearfully.

At last he found his tongue. "The Bijou!" said he. "Why, that is a name they gave to a little den in Dear Street, Mayfair. You haven't ever been and taken *that!* Built over a mews."

Christopher groaned. "That is the place, I fear."

"Why the owner is a friend of mine; an old patient. Stables stunk him out. Let it to a man; I forget his name. Stables stunk *him* out. He said, 'I shall go. 'You can't,' said my friend; 'you have taken a lease.' 'Lease be d——d,' said the other; 'I never took *your* house; here's quite a large stench not specified in your description of the property —*it can't be the same place;*' flung the lease at his head, and cut like the wind to foreign parts less odoriferous. I'd have got you the hole for ninety; but you are like your wife —you must go to an agent. What! don't you know that an agent is a man acting for you with an interest opposed to yours? Employing an agent! it is like a Trojan seeking the aid of a Greek. You needn't cry, Mrs. Staines; your husband has been let in deeper than you have. Now, you are young people beginning life; I'll give you a piece of advice. Employ others to do what you can't do, and it must be done; but never to do anything you can do better for yourselves! Agent! The word is derived from a Latin word '*agere*,' to do; and agents act up to their etymology, for they invariably *do* the nincompoop that employs them, or deals with them, in any mortal way. I'd have got you that beastly little Bijou for ninety pounds a year."

Uncle Philip went away crusty, leaving the young couple finely mortified and discouraged.

That did not last very long. Christopher noted the experience and Uncle Phil's wisdom in his diary, and then took his wife on his knee, and comforted her, and said, "Never mind; experience is worth money, and it always has to be bought. Those who cheat us will die poorer than we shall, if we are honest and economical. I have observed that people are seldom ruined by the vices of others; these may hurt them, of course; but it is only their own faults and follies that can destroy them."

"Ah! Christie," said Rosa, "you are a man! Oh, the comfort of being married to *a man.* A man sees the best side. I do adore men. Dearest, I will waste no more of your money. I will go to no more sales."

Christopher saw she was deeply mortified, and he said, quietly, "On the contrary, you will go to the very next. Only take Uncle Philip's advice, employ no broker; and watch the prices things fetch when you are not bidding; and keep cool."

She caressed his ears with both her white hands, and thanked him for giving her another trial. So that trouble melted in the sunshine of conjugal love.

Notwithstanding the agent's solemn assurance, the Bijou was out of repair. Dr. Staines detected internal odors, as well as those that flowed in from the mews. He was not the man to let his wife perish by miasma; so he had the drains all up, and actually found brick drains, and a cesspool. He stopped that up, and laid down new pipe drains, with a good fall, and properly trapped. The old drains were hidden, after the manner of builders. He had the whole course of his new drains marked upon all the floors they passed under, and had several stones and boards hinged to facilitate examination at any period.

But all this, with the necessary cleaning, whitewashing,

painting, and papering, ran away with money. Then came Rosa's purchases, which, to her amazement, amounted to one hundred and ninety pounds, and not a carpet, curtain, or bed amongst the lot. Then there was the carriage home from the auction-room, an expense one avoids by buying at a shop, and the broker claimed his shilling in the pound. This, however, Staines refused. The man came and blustered. Rosa, who was there, trembled. Then, for the first time, she saw her husband's brow lower; he seemed transfigured, and looked terrible. "You scoundrel," said he, "you set another villain like yourself to bid against you, and you betrayed the innocent lady that employed you. I could indict you and your confederate for a conspiracy. I take the goods out of respect for my wife's credit, but you shall gain nothing by swindling her. Be off, you heartless miscreant, or I'll" —

"I'll take the law, if you do."

"Take it, then! I'll give you something to howl for;" and he seized him with a grasp so tremendous that the fellow cried out in dismay, "Oh! don't hit me, sir; pray don't."

On this abject appeal, Staines tore the door open with his left hand, and spun the broker out into the passage with his right. Two movements of this angry Hercules, and the man was literally whirled out of sight with a rapidity and swiftness almost ludicrous; it was like a trick in a pantomime. A clatter on the stairs betrayed that he had gone down the first few steps in a wholesale and irregular manner, though he had just managed to keep his feet.

As for Staines, he stood there still lowering like thunder, and his eyes like hot coals; but his wife threw her tender arms around him, and begged him consolingly not to mind.

She was trembling like an aspen.

"Dear me," said Christopher, with a ludicrous change to marked politeness and respect, "I forgot *you*, in my righteous indignation." Next he became uxorious. "Did they frighten her, a duck? Sit on my knee, darling, and pull my hair, for not being more considerate — there! there!"

This was followed by the whole absurd soothing process, as practised by manly husbands upon quivering and somewhat hysterical wives, and ended with a formal apology. "You must not think that I am passionate; on the contrary, I am always practising self-government. My maxim is, *Animum rege qui nisi paret imperat*, and that means, Make your temper your servant, or else it will be your master. But to ill-use my dear little wife — it is unnatural, it is monstrous, it makes my blood boil."

"Oh, dear! don't go into another. It is all over. I can't bear to see you in a passion; you are so terrible, so beautiful. Ah! they are fine things, courage and strength. There's nothing I admire so much."

"Why, they are as common as dirt. What I admire is modesty, timidity, sweetness; the sensitive cheek that pales or blushes at a word, the bosom that quivers, and clings to a fellow whenever anything goes wrong."

"Oh, that is what you admire, is it?" said Rosa dryly.

"Admire it?" said Christopher, not seeing the trap; "I adore it."

"Then, Christie, dear, you are a Simpleton, that is all. And we are made for one another."

The house was to be furnished and occupied as soon as possible; so Mrs. Staines and Mrs. Cole went to another sale-room. Mrs. Staines remembered all Uncle Philip had said, and went plainly dressed; but her friend declined to sacrifice her showy dress to her friend's interests. Rosa thought that a little unkind, but said nothing.

In this auction-room they easily got a place at the table, but did not find it heaven; for a number of second-hand carpets were in the sale, and these, brimful of dust, were all shown on the table, and the dirt choked and poisoned our fair friends. Brokers pestered them, until at last Rosa, smarting under her late exposure, addressed the auctioneer quietly, in her silvery tones: "Sir, these gentlemen are annoying me by forcing their services on me. I do not intend to buy at all unless I can be allowed to bid for myself."

When Rosa, blushing and amazed at her own boldness, uttered these words, she little foresaw their effect. She had touched a popular sore.

"You are quite right, madam," said a respectable tradesman opposite her. "What business have these dirty fellows, without a shilling in their pockets, to go and force themselves on a lady against her will?"

"It has been complained of in the papers again and again," said another.

"What! mayn't we live as well as you?" retorted a broker.

"Yes, but not to force yourself on a lady. Why, she'd give you in charge of the police if you tried it on outside."

Then there was a downright clamor of discussion and chaff.

Presently up rises very slowly a countryman so colossal, that it seemed as if he would never have done getting up, and gives his experiences. He informed the company, in a broad Yorkshire dialect, that he did a bit in furniture, and at first starting these brokers buzzed about him like flies, and pestered him. "Aah damned 'em pretty hard," said he, "but they didn't heed any. So then ah spoke 'em civil, and ah said, 'Well, lads, I dinna come fra Yorkshire to sit like a dummy and let you buy wi'

my brass; the first that pesters me again ah'll just fell him on t' plaace, like a caulf, and ah'm not very sure he'll get up again in a hurry.' So they dropped me like a hot potato; never pestered me again. But if they won't give over pestering you, mistress, ah'll come round and just stand behind your chair, and bring nieve with me," showing a fist like a leg of mutton.

"No, no," said the auctioneer, "that will not do. I will have no disturbance here. Call the policeman."

While the clerk went to the door for the bobby, a gentleman reminded the auctioneer that the journals had repeatedly drawn attention to the nuisance.

"Fault of the public, not mine, sir. Policeman, stand behind that lady's chair, and if anybody annoys her put him quietly into the street."

"This auction-room will be to let soon," said a voice at the end of the table.

"This auction-room," said the auctioneer, master of the gay or grave at a moment's notice, "is supported by the public and the trade; it is not supported by paupers."

A Jew upholsterer put in his word. "I do my own business; but I like to let a poor man live."

"Jonathan," said the auctioneer to one of his servants, "after this sale you may put up the shutters; we have gone and offended Mr. Jacobs. He keeps a shop in Blind Alley, Whitechapel. Now then, lot 69."

Rosa bid timidly for one or two lots, and bought them cheap.

The auctioneer kept looking her way, and she had only to nod.

The obnoxious broker got opposite her, and ran her up a little out of spite; but as he had only got half a crown about him, and no means of doubling it, he dared not go far.

On the other side of the table was a figure to which

Rosa's eyes often turned with interest — a fair young boy about twelve years old; he had golden hair, and was in deep mourning. His appearance interested Rosa, and she wondered how he came there, and why; he looked like a lamb wedged in among wolves, a flower among weeds. As the lots proceeded, the boy seemed to get uneasy; and at last, when lot 73 was put up, anybody could see in his poor little face that he was there to bid for it.

"Lot 73, an armchair covered in morocco. An excellent and useful article. Should not be at all surprised if it was made by Gillow."

"Gillow would though," said Jacobs, who owed him a turn.

Chorus of dealers. — "Haw! haw!"

The auctioneer. — "I like to hear some people run a lot down; shows they are going to bid for it in earnest. Well, name your own price. Five pounds to begin?"

Now if nobody had spoken the auctioneer would have gone on, "Well, four pounds then — three, two, whatever you like," and at last obtained a *bona fide* offer of thirty shillings; but the moment he said "Five pounds to begin," the boy in black lifted up his childish treble and bid thus, "Five pound ten" — "six pounds" — "six pound ten" — "seven pounds" — "seven pound ten" — "eight pounds" — "eight pound ten" — "nine pounds" — "nine pound ten" — "ten pounds!" without interruption, and indeed almost in a breath.

There was a momentary pause of amazement, and then an outburst of chaff.

"Nice little boy!"

"Didn't he say his lesson well?"

"Favor us with your card, sir. You are a gent as knows how to buy."

"What did he stop for? If it's worth ten, it is worth a hundred."

"Bless the child!" said a female dealer, kindly, "what made you go on like that? Why, there was no one bid against you! you'd have got it for two pounds — a rickety old thing."

Young master began to whimper. "Why, the gentleman said, 'Five pounds to *begin*.' It was the chair poor grandpapa always sat in, and all the things are sold, and mamma said it would break her heart to lose it. She was too ill to come, so she sent me. She told me I was not to let it be sold away from us for less than ten pounds, or she sh—should be m—m—miserable," and the poor little fellow began to cry. Rosa followed suit promptly but unobtrusively.

"Sentiment always costs money," said Mr. Jacobs, gravely.

"How do you know?" asked Mr. Cohen. "Have *you* got any on hand? I never seen none at your shop."

Some tempting things now came up, and Mrs. Staines bid freely; but all of a sudden she looked down the table, and there was Uncle Philip, twinkling as before. "Oh, dear! what am I doing now!" thought she. "I have got no broker."

She bid on, but in fear and trembling, because of those twinkling eyes. At last she mustered courage, wrote on a leaf of her pocket-book, and passed it down to him: "It would be only kind to warn me. What am I doing wrong?"

He sent her back a line directly: "Auctioneer running you up himself. Follow his eye when he bids; you will see there is no *bona fide* bidder at your prices."

Rosa did so, and found that it was true.

She nodded to Uncle Philip; and, with her expressive face, asked him what she should do.

The old boy must have his joke. So he wrote back: "Tell him, as you see he has a fancy for certain articles,

you would not be so discourteous as to bid against him."

The next article but one was a drawing-room suite Rosa wanted; but the auctioneer bid against her; so at eighteen pounds she stopped.

"It is against you, madam," said the auctioneer.

"Yes, sir," said Rosa; "but as you are the only bidder, and you have been so kind to me, I would not think of opposing you."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth, when they were greeted with a roar of Homeric laughter that literally shook the room, and this time not at the expense of the innocent speaker.

"That's into your mutton, governor."

"Sharp's the word this time."

"I say, governor, don't you want a broker to bid for ye?"

"Wink at me next time, sir; I'll do the office for you."

"No greenhorns left now."

"That lady won't give a ten-pund note for her grandfather's armchair."

"Oh, yes, she will, if it's stuffed with banknotes."

"Put the next lot up with the owner's name and the reserve price. Open business."

"And sing a psalm at starting."

"A little less noise in Judæa, if you please," said the auctioneer, who had now recovered from the blow. "Lot 97."

This was a very pretty marqueterie cabinet; it stood against the wall, and Rosa had set her heart upon it. Nobody would bid. She had muzzled the auctioneer effectually.

"Your own price."

"Two pounds," said Rosa.

A dealer offered guineas; and it advanced slowly to

four pounds and half a crown, at which it was about to be knocked down to Rosa, when suddenly a new bidder arose in the broker Rosa had rejected. They bid slowly and sturdily against each other, until a line was given to Rosa from Uncle Philip.

"This time it is your own friend, the snipe-nosed woman. She telegraphed a broker."

Rosa read, and crushed the note. "Six guineas," said she.

"Six-ten."

"Seven."

"Seven-ten."

"Eight."

"Eight-ten."

"Ten guineas," said Rosa; and then, with feminine cunning, stealing a sudden glance, caught her friend leaning back and signalling the broker not to give in.

"Eleven pounds."

"Twelve."

"Thirteen."

"Fourteen."

"Sixteen."

"Eighteen."

"Twenty."

"Twenty guineas."

"It is yours, my faithful friend," said Rosa, turning suddenly round to Mrs. Cole, with a magnificent glance no one would have thought her capable of.

Then she rose and stalked away.

Dumfounded for the moment, Mrs. Cole followed her, and stopped her at the door.

"Why, Rosie dear, it is the only thing I have bid for. There I've sat by your side like a mouse."

Rosa turned gravely towards her. "You know it is not that. You had only to tell me you wanted it. I

would never have been so mean as to bid against you."

"Mean, indeed!" said Florence, tossing her head.

"Yes, mean; to draw back and hide behind the friend you were with, and employ the very rogue she had turned off. But it is my own fault. Cecilia warned me against you. She always said you were a treacherous girl."

"And I say you are an impudent little minx. Only just married, and going about like two vagabonds, and talk to me like that!"

"We are not going about like two vagabonds. We have taken a house in Mayfair."

"Say a stable."

"It was by your advice, you false-hearted creature."

"You are a fool."

"You are worse; you are a traitress."

"Then don't you have anything to do with me."

"Heaven forbid I should, you treacherous thing!"

"You insolent — insolent — I hate you."

"And I despise you."

"I always hated you at bottom."

"That's why you pretended to love me, you wretch."

"Well, I pretend no more. I am your enemy for life."

"Thank you. You have told the truth for once in your life."

"I have. And he shall never call in your husband; so you may leave Mayfair as soon as you like."

"Not to please you, madam. We can get on without traitors."

And so they parted, with eyes that gleamed like tigers.

Rosa drove home in great agitation, and tried to tell Christopher; but choked, and became hysterical. The husband-physician coaxed and scolded her out of that;

and presently in came Uncle Philip, full of the humors of the auction-room. He told about the little boy with a delight that disgusted Mrs. Staines, and then was particularly merry on female friendships. "Fancy a man going to a sale with his friend, and bidding against him on the sly."

"She is no friend of mine. We are enemies for life."

"And you were to be friends till death," said Staines, with a sigh.

Philip inquired who she was.

"Mrs. John Cole."

"Not of Curzon Street?"

"Yes."

"And you have quarrelled with her?"

"Yes."

"Well, but her husband is a general practitioner."

"She is a traitress."

"But her husband could put a good deal of money in Christopher's way."

"I can't help it. She is a traitress."

"And you have quarrelled with her about an old wardrobe."

"No, for her disloyalty, and her base good-for-nothingness. Oh! oh! oh!"

Uncle Philip got up, looking sour. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Christopher," said he, very dryly.

Christopher accompanied him to the foot of the stairs.

"Well, Christopher," said he, "matrimony is a blunder at the best; and you have not done the thing by halves. You have married a simpleton. She will be your ruin."

"Uncle Philip, since you only come here to insult us, I hope in future you will stay at home."

"Oh! with pleasure, sir. Good-by!"

CHAPTER VII.

Christopher Staines came back, looking pained and disturbed. "There," said he, "I feared it would come to this. I have quarrelled with Uncle Philip."

"Oh! how could you?"

"He affronted me."

"What about?"

"Never you mind. Don't let us say anything more about it, darling. It is a pity, a sad pity—he was a good friend of mine once."

He paused, entered what had passed in his diary, and then sat down, with a gentle expression of sadness on his manly features. Rosa hung about him, soft and pitying, till it cleared away, at all events for the time.

Next day they went together to clear the goods Rosa had purchased. Whilst the list was being made out in the office, in came the fair-haired boy, with a ten-pound note in his very hand. Rosa caught sight of it, and turned to the auctioneer, with a sweet, pitying face: "Oh! sir, surely you will not take all that money from him, poor child, for a rickety old chair."

The auctioneer stared with amazement at her simplicity, and said, "What would the vendors say to me?"

She looked distressed, and said, "Well, then, really we ought to raise a subscription, poor thing!"

"Why, ma'am," said the auctioneer, "he isn't hurt: the article belonged to his mother and her sister; the brother-in-law isn't on good terms; so he demanded a public sale. She will get back four pun ten out of it."

Here the clerk put in his word. "And there's five pounds paid, I forgot to tell you."

"Oh! left a deposit, did he?"

"No, sir. But the laughing hyena gave you five pounds at the end of the sale."

"The laughing hyena, Mr. Jones?"

"Oh! beg pardon; that is what we call him in the room. He has got such a curious laugh."

"Oh! I know the gent. He is a retired doctor. I wish he'd laugh less and buy more: and *he* gave you five pounds towards the young gentleman's arm-chair! Well, I should as soon have expected blood from a flint. You have got five pounds to pay, sir: so now the chair will cost your mamma ten shillings. Give him the order and the change, Mr. Jones."

Christopher and Rosa talked this over in the room whilst the men were looking out their purchases. "Come," said Rosa; "now I forgive him sneering at me; his heart is not really hard, you see." Staines, on the contrary, was very angry. "What!" he cried, "pity a boy who made one bad bargain, that, after all, was not a very bad bargain; and he had no kindness, nor even common humanity, for my beautiful Rosa, inexperienced as a child, and buying for her husband, like a good, affectionate, honest creature, amongst a lot of sharpers and hard-hearted cynics — like himself."

"It *was* cruel of him," said Rosa, altering her mind in a moment, and half inclined to cry.

This made Christopher furious. "The ill-natured, crotchety, old — the fact is, he is a misogynist."

"Oh, the wretch!" said Rosa warmly. "And what is that?"

"A woman-hater."

"Oh! is that all? Why, so do I — after that Florence Cole. Women are mean, heartless things. Give me men; they are loyal and true."

"All of them?" inquired Christopher, a little satirically. "Read the papers."

"Every soul of them," said Mrs. Staines, passing loftily over the proposed test. "That is, all the ones *I* care about; and that is my own, own one."

Disagreeable creatures to have about one — these simpletons!

Mrs. Staines took Christopher to shops to buy the remaining requisites: and in three days more the house was furnished, two female servants engaged, and the couple took their luggage over to the Bijou.

Rosa was excited and happy at the novelty of possession and authority, and that close sense of house proprietorship which belongs to woman. By dinner-time she could have told you how many shelves there were in every cupboard, and knew the Bijou by heart in a way that Christopher never knew it. All this ended, as running about and excitement generally does, with my lady being exhausted, and lax with fatigue. So then he made her lie down on a little couch, while he went through his accounts.

When he had examined all the bills carefully he looked very grave, and said, "Who would believe this? We began with three thousand pounds. It was to last us several years — till I got a good practice. Rosa, there is only fourteen hundred and forty pounds left."

"Oh, impossible!" said Rosa. "Oh, dear! why did I ever enter a saleroom?"

"No, no, my darling; you were bitten once or twice, but you made some good bargains too. Remember there was four hundred pounds set apart for my life policy."

"What a waste of money!"

"Your father did not think so. Then the lease; the premium; repairs of the drains that would have poisoned my Rosa; turning the coach-house into a dispensary;

painting, papering, and furnishing; china, and linen, and everything to buy. We must look at this seriously. Only fourteen hundred and forty pounds left. A slow profession. No friends. I have quarrelled with Uncle Philip: you with Mrs. Cole; and her husband would have launched me."

"And it was to please her we settled here. Oh, I could kill her: nasty cat!"

"Never mind; it is not a case for despondency, but it is for prudence. All we have to do is to look the thing in the face, and be very economical in everything. I had better give you an allowance for housekeeping; and I earnestly beg you to buy things yourself whilst you are a poor man's wife, and pay ready money for everything. My mother was a great manager, and she always said, 'There is but one way: be your own market-woman, and pay on the spot; never let the tradesmen get you on their books, or, what with false weight, double charges, and the things your servants order that never enter the house, you lose more than a hundred a year by cheating.'"

Rosa yielded a languid assent to this part of his discourse, and it hardly seemed to enter her mind; but she raised no objection; and in due course he made her a special allowance for housekeeping.

It soon transpired that medical advice was to be had, gratis, at the Bijou, from eight till ten: and there was generally a good attendance. But a week passed, and not one patient came of the class this couple must live by. Christopher set this down to what people call "the transition period:" his Kent patients had lost him; his London patients not found him. He wrote to all his patients in the country, and many of his pupils at the university, to let them know where he was settled: and then he waited.

Not a creature came.

Rosa bore this very well for a time, so long as the house was a novelty; but when that excitement was worn out, she began to be very dull, and used to come and entice him out to walk with her: he would look wistfully at her, but object that, if he left the house, he should be sure to lose a patient.

"Oh, they won't come any more for our staying in — tiresome things!" said Rosa.

But Christopher would kiss her, and remain firm. "My love," said he, "you do not realize how hard a fight there is before us. How should you? You are very young. No, for your sake, I must not throw a chance away. Write to your female friends: that will while away an hour or two."

"What, after that Florence Cole?"

"Write to those who have not made such violent professions."

"So I will, dear. Especially to those that are married and come to London. Oh, and I'll write to that cold-blooded thing, Lady Cicely Treherne. Why do you shake your head?"

"Did I? I was not aware. Well, dear, if ladies of rank were to come here, I fear they might make you discontented with your lot."

"All the women on earth could not do that. However, the chances are she will not come near me: she left the school quite a big girl, an immense girl, when I was only twelve. She used to smile at my capriccios; and once she kissed me — actually. She was an awful Sawny, though, and so affected: I think I will write to her."

These letters brought just one lady, a Mrs. Turner, who talked to Rosa very glibly about herself, and amused Rosa twice: at the third visit, Rosa tried to change the conversation. Mrs. Turner instantly got up, and went

away. She could not bear the sound of the human voice, unless it was talking about her and her affairs.

And now Staines began to feel downright uneasy. Income was going steadily out: not a shilling coming in. The lame, the blind, and the sick frequented his dispensary, and got his skill out of him gratis, and sometimes a little physic, a little wine, and other things that cost him money: but of the patients that pay, not one came to his front door.

He walked round and round his little yard, like a hyena in its cage, waiting, waiting, waiting: and oh! how he envied the lot of those who can hunt for work, instead of having to stay at home and wait for others to come, whose will they cannot influence. His heart began to sicken with hope deferred, and dim forebodings of the future; and he saw, with grief, that his wife was getting duller and duller, and that her days dragged more heavily far than his own; for he could study.

At last his knocker began to show signs of life: his visitors were physicians. His lectures on "Diagnosis" were well known to them; and one after another found him out. They were polite, kind, even friendly; but here it ended: these gentlemen, of course, did not resign their patients to him; and the inferior class of practitioners avoided his door like a pestilence.

Mrs. Staines, who had always lived for amusement, could strike out no fixed occupation; her time hung like lead; the house was small; and in small houses the faults of servants run against the mistress, and she can't help seeing them, and all the worse for her. It is easier to keep things clean in the country, and Rosa had a high standard, which her two servants could never quite attain. This annoyed her, and she began to scold a little. They answered civilly, but in other respects remained imperfect beings; they laid out every shilling

they earned in finery; and, this, I am ashamed to say, irritated Mrs. Staines, who was wearing out her wedding garments, and had no excuse for buying, and Staines had begged her to be economical. The more they dressed, the more she scolded; they began to answer. She gave the cook warning; the other, though not on good terms with the cook, had a gush of *esprit de corps* directly, and gave Mrs. Staines warning.

Mrs. Staines told her husband all this: he took her part, though without openly interfering; and they had two new servants, not so good as the last.

This worried Rosa sadly; but it was a flea-bite to the deeper nature, and more forecasting mind of her husband, still doomed to pace that miserable yard, like a hyena, chafing, seeking, longing for the patient that never came.

Rosa used to look out of his dressing-room window, and see him pace the yard. At first, tears of pity stood in her eyes. By and by she got angry with the world; and at last, strange to say, a little irritated with him. It is hard for a weak woman to keep up all her respect for the man that fails.

One day, after watching him a long time unseen, she got excited, put on her shawl and bonnet, and ran down to him: she took him by the arm: "If you love me, come out of this prison, and walk with me; we are too miserable. I shall be your first patient if this goes on much longer." He looked at her, saw she was very excited, and had better be humored; so he kissed her and just said, with a melancholy smile, "How poor are they that have not patience!" Then he put on his hat, and walked in the Park and Kensington Gardens with her. The season was just beginning. There were carriages enough, and gay Amazons enough, to make poor Rosa sigh more than once.

Christopher heard the sigh; and pressed her arm, and said, "Courage, love, I hope to see you among them yet."

"The sooner the better," said she, a little hardly.

"And, meantime, which of them all is as beautiful as you?"

"All I know is, they are more attractive. Who looks at me, walking tamely by?"

Christopher said nothing: but these words seemed to imply a thirst for admiration, and made him a little uneasy.

By and by the walk put the swift-changing Rosa in spirits, and she began to chat gayly, and hung prattling and beaming on her husband's arm, when they entered Curzon Street. Here, however, occurred an incident, trifling in itself, but unpleasant. Dr. Staines saw one of his best Kentish patients get feebly out of his carriage, and call on Dr. Barr. He started, and stopped. Rosa asked what was the matter. He told her. She said, "We *are* unfortunate."

Staines said nothing; he only quickened his pace; but he was greatly disturbed. She expected him to complain that she had dragged him out, and lost him that first chance. But he said nothing. When they got home, he asked the servant had anybody called.

"No, sir."

"Surely you are mistaken, Jane. A gentleman in a carriage!"

"Not a creature have been since you went out, sir."

"Well, then, dearest," said he sweetly, "we have nothing to reproach ourselves with." Then he knit his brow gloomily. "It is worse than I thought. It seems even one's country patients go to another doctor when they visit London. It is hard. It is hard."

Rosa leaned her head on his shoulder, and curled round him, as one she would shield against the world's injus-

tice; but she said nothing; she was a little frightened at his eye that lowered, and his noble frame that trembled a little, with ire suppressed.

Two days after this, a brougham drove up to the door, and a tallish, fattish, pasty-faced man got out, and inquired for Dr. Staines.

He was shown into the dining-room, and told Jane he had come to consult the doctor.

Rosa had peeped over the stairs, all curiosity; she glided noiselessly down, and with love's swift foot got into the yard before Jane. "He is come! he is come! Kiss me."

Dr. Staines kissed her first, and then asked who was come.

"Oh, nobody of any consequence. *Only* the first patient. Kiss me again."

Dr. Staines kissed her again, and then was for going to the first patient.

"No," said she; "not yet. I met a doctor's wife at Dr. Mayne's, and she told me things. You must always keep them waiting; or else they think nothing of you. Such a funny woman! 'Treat 'em like dogs, my dear,' she said. But I told her they wouldn't come to be treated like dogs or any other animal."

"You had better have kept that to yourself, I think."

"Oh! if you are going to be disagreeable, good-by. You can go to your patient, sir. Christie, dear, if he is very — very ill — and I'm sure I hope he is — oh, how wicked I am; may I have a new bonnet?"

"If you really want one."

On the patient's card was "Mr. Pettigrew, 47 Manchester Square."

As soon as Staines entered the room, the first patient told him who and what he was, a retired civilian from India; but he had got a son there still, a very rising

man; wanted to be a parson; but he would not stand that; bad profession; don't rise by merit; very hard to rise at all; — no, India was the place. "As for me, I made my fortune there in ten years. Obliged to leave it now — invalid this many years; no *tone*. Tried two or three doctors in this neighborhood; heard there was a new one, had written a book on something. Thought I would try *him*."

To stop him, Staines requested to feel his pulse, and examine his tongue and eye.

"You are suffering from indigestion," said he. "I will write you a prescription; but if you want to get well, you must simplify your diet very much."

While he was writing the prescription, off went this patient's tongue, and ran through the topics of the day and into his family history again.

Staines listened politely. He could afford it, having only this one.

At last, the first patient, having delivered an octavo volume of nothing, rose to go; but it seems that speaking an "infinite deal of nothing" exhausts the body, though it does not affect the mind; for the first patient sank down in his chair again. "I have excited myself too much — feel rather faint."

Staines saw no signs of coming syncope; he rang the bell quietly, and ordered a decanter of sherry to be brought; the first patient filled himself a glass; then another; and went off, revived, to chatter elsewhere. But at the door he said, "I had always a running account with Dr. Mivar. I suppose you don't object to that system. Double fee the first visit, single afterwards."

Dr. Staines bowed a little stiffly; he would have preferred the money. However, he looked at the Blue Book, and found his visitor lived at 47 Manchester Square; so that removed his anxiety.

The first patient called every other day, chattered nineteen to the dozen, was exhausted, drank two glasses of sherry, and drove away.

Soon after this a second patient called. This one was a deputy patient — Collett, a retired butler — kept a lodging-house, and waited at parties; he lived close by, but had a married daughter in Chelsea. Would the doctor visit her, and *he* would be responsible?

Staines paid the woman a visit or two, and treated her so effectually, that soon her visits were paid to him. She was cured, and Staines, who by this time wanted to see money, sent to Collett.

Collett did not answer.

Staines wrote warmly.

Collett dead silent.

Staines employed a solicitor.

Collett said he had recommended the patient, that was all. He had never said he would pay her debts. That was her husband's business.

Now her husband was the mate of a ship; would not be in England for eighteen months.

The woman, visited by lawyer's clerk, cried bitterly, and said she and her children had scarcely enough to eat.

Lawyer advised Staines to abandon the case, and pay him two pounds fifteen shillings expenses. He did so.

"This is damnable," said he. "I must get it out of Pettigrew; by-the-by, he has not been here this two days."

He waited another day for Pettigrew, and then wrote to him. No answer. Called. Pettigrew gone abroad. House in Manchester Square to let.

Staines went to the house-agent with his tale. Agent was impenetrable at first; but, at last, won by the doctor's manner and his unhappiness, referred him to Pettigrew's solicitor; the solicitor was a respectable

man, and said he would forward the claim to Pettigrew in Paris.

But by this time Pettigrew was chattering and guzzling in Berlin; and thence he got to St. Petersburg. In that stronghold of gluttony, he gormandized more than ever, and, being unable to talk it off his stomach, as in other cities, had apoplexy, and died.

But long before this Staines saw his money was as irrecoverable as his sherry; and he said to Rosa, "I wonder whether I shall ever live to curse the human race?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Rosa. "Oh, they use you cruelly, my poor, poor Christie!"

Thus for months the young doctor's patients bled him, and that was all.

And Rosa got more and more moped at being in the house so much, and pestered Christopher to take her out, and he declined: and, being a man hard to beat, took to writing on medical subjects, in hopes of getting some money from the various medical and scientific publications; but he found it as hard to get the wedge in there as to get patients.

At last Rosa's remonstrances began to rise into something that sounded like reproaches. One Sunday she came to him in her bonnet, and interrupted his studies, to say he might as well lay down the pen, and talk. Nobody would publish anything he wrote.

Christopher frowned, but contained himself, and laid down the pen.

"I might as well not be married at all as be a doctor's wife. You are never seen out with me, not even to church. Do behave like a Christian, and come to church with me now."

Dr. Staines shook his head.

"Why, I wouldn't miss church for all the world. Any

excitement is better than always moping. Come over the water with me. The time Jane and I went, the clergyman read a paper that Mr. Brown had fallen down in a fit. There was such a rush directly, and I'm sure fifty ladies went out — fancy, all Mrs. Browns! Wasn't that fun?"

"Fun? I don't see it. Well, Rosa, your mind is evidently better adapted to diversion than mine is. Go you to church, love, and I'll continue my studies."

"Then all I can say is, I wish I was back in my father's house. Husband! friend! companion! — I have none."

Then she burst out crying violently; and, being shocked at what she had said, and at the agony it had brought into her husband's face, she went off into hysterics; and as his heart would not let him bellow at her, or empty a bucket on her as he would on another patient, she had a good long bout of them: and got her way, for she broke up his studies for that day, at all events.

Even after the hysterics were got under, she continued to moan and sigh very prettily, with her lovely, languid head pillowed on her husband's arm; in a word, though the hysterics were real, yet this innocent young person had the presence of mind to postpone entire convalescence, and lay herself out to be petted all day. But fate willed it otherwise: while she was sighing and moaning, came to the door a scurrying of feet, and then a sharp, persistent ringing that meant something. The moaner cocked eye and ear, and said, in her every-day voice, which, coming so suddenly, sounded very droll, "What is that, I wonder?"

Jane hurried to the street-door, and Rosa recovered by magic; and, preferring gossip to hysterics, in an almost gleeful whisper, ordered Christopher to open the door of the study. The Bijou was so small that the following dialogue rang in their ears:—

A boy in buttons gasped out, "Oh, if you please, will you ast the doctor to come round directly; there's a haccident."

"La, bless me!" said Jane, and never budged.

"Yes, miss. It's our missus's little girl fallen right off an i-chair, and cut her head dreadful, and smothered in blood."

"La, to be sure!" And she waited steadily for more.

"Ay, and missus she fainted right off; and I've been to the regler doctor, which he's out; and Sarah, the housemaid, said I had better come here; you was only just set up, she said; you wouldn't have so much to do, says she."

"That is all *she* knows," said Jane. "Why, our master — they pulls him in pieces which is to have him fust."

"What an awful liar! Oh, you good girl!" whispered Dr. Staines and Rosa in one breath.

"Ah, well," said Buttons, "any way, Sarah says she knows you are clever, 'cos her little girl as lives with her mother, and calls Sarah aunt, has bin to your 'spensary with ringworm, and you cured her right off."

"Ay, and a good many more," said Jane, loftily. She was a housemaid of imagination; and while Staines was putting some lint and an instrument case into his pocket, she proceeded to relate a number of miraculous cures. Dr. Staines interrupted them by suddenly emerging, and inviting Buttons to take him to the house.

Mrs. Staines was so pleased with Jane for cracking up the doctor, that she gave her five shillings; and, after that, used to talk to her a great deal more than to the cook, which judicious conduct presently set all three by the ears.

Buttons took the doctor to a fine house in the same street, and told him his mistress's name on the way —

Mrs. Lucas. He was taken up to the nursery, and found Mrs. Lucas seated, crying and lamenting, and a woman holding a little girl of about seven, whose brow had been cut open by the fender, on which she had fallen from a chair; it looked very ugly, and was even now bleeding.

Dr. Staines lost no time; he examined the wound keenly, and then said kindly to Mrs. Lucas, "I am happy to tell you it is not serious." He then asked for a large basin and some tepid water, and bathed it so softly and soothingly that the child soon became composed; and the mother discovered the artist at once. He compressed the wound, and explained to Mrs. Lucas that the principal thing really was to avoid an ugly scar. "There is no danger," said he. He then bound the wound neatly up, and had the girl put to bed. "You will not wake her at any particular hour, nurse. Let her sleep. Have a little strong beef-tea ready, and give it her at any hour, night or day, she asks for it. But do not force it on her, or you will do her more harm than good. She had better sleep before she eats."

Mrs. Lucas begged him to come every morning; and, as he was going, she shook hands with him, and the soft palm deposited a hard substance wrapped in paper. He took it with professional gravity and seeming unconsciousness; but, once outside the house, went home on wings. He ran up to the drawing-room, and found his wife seated, and playing at reading. He threw himself on his knees, and the fee into her lap; and, while she unfolded the paper with an ejaculation of pleasure, he said, "Darling, the first real patient — the first real fee. It is yours to buy the new bonnet."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said she, with her eyes glistening. "But I'm afraid one can't get a bonnet fit to wear — for a guinea."

Dr. Staines visited his little patient every day, and

received his guinea. Mrs. Lucas also called him in for her own little ailments, and they were the best possible kind of ailments: for, being imaginary, there was no limit to them.

Then did Mrs. Staines turn jealous of her husband. "They never ask me," said she; "and I am moped to death."

"It is hard," said Christopher, sadly. "But have a little patience. Society will come to you long before practice comes to me."

About two o'clock one afternoon a carriage and pair drove up, and a gorgeous footman delivered a card — "Lady Cicely Treherne."

Of course Mrs. Staines was at home, and only withheld by propriety from bounding into the passage to meet her school-fellow. However, she composed herself in the drawing-room, and presently the door was opened, and a very tall young woman, richly but not gayly dressed, drifted into the room, and stood there a statue of composure.

Rosa had risen to fly to her; but the reverence a girl of eighteen strikes into a child of twelve hung about her still, and she came timidly forward, blushing and sparkling, a curious contrast in color and mind to her visitor; for Lady Cicely was Languor in person — her hair whitey-brown, her face a fine oval, but almost colorless; her eyes a pale gray, her neck and hands incomparably white and beautiful — a lymphatic young lady, a live antidote to emotion. However, Rosa's beauty, timidity, and undisguised affectionateness were something so different from what she was used to in the world of fashion, that she actually smiled, and held out both her hands a little way. Rosa seized them, and pressed them; they left her, and remained passive and limp.

"O Lady Cicely," said Rosa, "how kind of you to come."

"How kind of you to send to me," was the polite, but perfectly cool reply. "But how you are gwown, and — may I say impwoved? — You la petite Lusignan! It is incwedible," lisped her ladyship, very calmly.

"I was only a child," said Rosa. "You were always so beautiful and tall, and kind to a little monkey like me. Oh, pray sit down, Lady Cicely, and talk of old times."

She drew her gently to the sofa, and they sat down hand in hand; but Lady Cicely's high-bred reserve made her a very poor gossip about anything that touched herself and her family; so Rosa, though no egotist, was drawn into talking about herself more than she would have done had she deliberately planned the conversation. But here was an old school-fellow, and a singularly polite listener, and so out came her love, her genuine happiness, her particular griefs, and especially the crowning grievance, no society, moped to death, etc.

Lady Cicely could hardly understand the sentiment in a woman who so evidently loved her husband. "Society!" said she, after due reflection, "why, it is a boa." (And here I may as well explain that Lady Cicely spoke certain words falsely, and others affectedly; and as for the letter *r*, she could say it if she made a hearty effort, but was generally too lazy to throw her leg over it.) "Society! I'm dwenched to death with it. If I could only catch fiah like other women, and love somebody, I would much rather have a *tête-à-tête* with him than go teawing about all day and all night, from one unintwisting cwowd to another. To be sure," said she, puzzling the matter out, "you are a beauty, and would be more looked at."

"The idea! and — oh no! no! it is not that. But even in the country we had always some society."

"Well, dyar, believe me, with your appeawance, you can have as much society as you please; but it will boa

you to death, as it does me, and then you will long to be left quiet with a sensible man who loves you."

Said Rosa, "When shall I have another *tête-à-tête* with *you*, I wonder? Oh, it has been such a comfort to me. Bless you for coming. There — I wrote to Cecilia, and Emily, and Mrs. Bosanquet that is now, and all my sworn friends, and to think of you being the one to come — you that never kissed me but once, and an earl's daughter into the bargain."

"Ha! ha! ha!" — Lady Cicely actually laughed for once in a way, and did not feel the effort. "As for kissing," said she, "if I fall shawt, fawgive me. I was nevaa vewy demonstwative."

"No; and I have had a lesson. That Florence Cole — Florence Whiting that was, you know — was always kissing me, and she has turned out a traitor. I'll tell you all about her." And she did.

Lady Cicely thought Mrs. Staines a little too unreserved in her conversation; but was so charmed with her sweetness and freshness that she kept up the acquaintance, and called on her twice a week during the season. At first she wondered that her visits were not returned; but Rosa let out that she was ashamed to call on foot in Grosvenor Square.

Lady Cicely shrugged her beautiful shoulders a little at that; but she continued to do the visiting, and to enjoy the simple, innocent rapture with which she was received.

This lady's pronunciation of many words was false or affected. She said "good murning" for "good morning," and turned other vowels to diphthongs, and played two or three pranks with her "r's." But we cannot be all imperfection: with her pronunciation her folly came to a full stop. I really believe she lisped less nonsense and bad taste in a year than some of us articulate in a day. To be sure, folly is generally uttered in a hurry, and she

was too deplorably lazy to speak fast on any occasion whatever.

One day Mrs. Staines took her up-stairs, and showed her from the back window her husband pacing the yard, waiting for patients. Lady Cicely folded her arms, and contemplated him at first with a sort of zoölogical curiosity. Gentleman pacing back yard, like hyena, she had never seen before.

At last she opened her mouth in a whisper, "What is he doing?"

"Waiting for patients."

"Oh! Waiting — for — patients?"

"For patients that never come, and never will come."

"Cuwious! How little I know of life."

"It is that all day, dear, or else writing."

Lady Cicely, with her eyes fixed on Staines, made a motion with her hand that she was attending.

"And they won't publish a word he writes."

"Poor man!"

"Nice for me; is it not?"

"I begin to understand," said Lady Cicely quietly; and soon after retired with her invariable composure.

Meantime, Dr. Staines, like a good husband, had thrown out occasional hints to Mrs. Lucas that he had a wife, beautiful, accomplished, moped. More than that, he went so far as to regret to her that Mrs. Staines, being in a neighborhood new to him, saw so little society; the more so, as she was formed to shine, and had not been used to seclusion.

All these hints fell dead on Mrs. Lucas. A handsome and skilful doctor was welcome to her: his wife — that was quite another matter.

But one day Mrs. Lucas saw Lady Cicely Treherne's carriage standing at the door. The style of the whole turnout impressed her. She wondered whose it was.

On another occasion she saw it drive up, and the lady get out. She recognized her; and the very next day this *parvenue* said adroitly, "Now, Dr. Staines, really you can't be allowed to hide your wife in this way. (Staines stared.) Why not introduce her to me next Wednesday? It is my night. I would give a dinner expressly for her; but I don't like to do that while my husband is in Naples."

When Staines carried the invitation to his wife, she was delighted, and kissed him with childish frankness.

But the very next moment she became thoughtful, uneasy, depressed. "Oh, dear; I've nothing to wear."

"Oh, nonsense, Rosa. Your wedding outfit."

"The idea! I can't go as a bride. It's not a masquerade."

"But you have other dresses."

"All gone by, more or less; or not fit for such parties as *she* gives. A hundred carriages!"

"Bring them down, and let me see them."

"Oh yes." And the lady, who had nothing to wear, paraded a very fair show of dresses.

Staines saw something to admire in all of them. Mrs. Staines found more to object to in each.

At last he fell upon a silver-gray silk, of superlative quality.

"That! It is as old as the hills," shrieked Rosa.

"It looks just out of the shop. Come, tell the truth; how often have you worn it?"

"I wore it before I was married."

"Ay, but how often?"

"Twice. Three times, I believe."

"I thought so. It is good as new."

"But I have had it so long by me. I had it two years before I made it up."

"What does that matter? Do you think the people

can tell how long a dress has been lurking in your wardrobe? This is childish, Rosa. There, with this dress as good as new, and your beauty, you will be as much admired, and perhaps hated, as your heart can desire."

"I am afraid not," said Rosa naïvely. "Oh, how I wish I had known a week ago."

"I am very thankful you did not," said Staines dryly.

At ten o'clock Mrs. Staines was nearly dressed; at a quarter past ten she demanded ten minutes; at half-past ten she sought a reprieve; at a quarter to eleven, being assured that the street was full of carriages, which had put down at Mrs. Lucas's, she consented to emerge; and in a minute they were at the house.

They were shown first into a cloak-room, and then into a tea-room, and then mounted the stairs. One servant took their names, and bawled them to another four yards off, he to another about as near, and so on; and they edged themselves into the room, not yet too crowded to move in.

They had not taken many steps, on the chance of finding their hostess, when a slight buzz arose, and seemed to follow them.

Rosa wondered what that was; but only for a moment; she observed a tall, stout, aquiline woman fix an eye of bitter, diabolical, malignant hatred on her; and as she advanced, ugly noses were cocked disdainfully, and scraggy shoulders elevated at the risk of sending the bones through the leather, and a titter or two shot after her. A woman's instinct gave her the key at once; the sexes had complimented her at sight; each in their way; the men with respectful admiration; the women, with their inflammable jealousy and ready hatred in another of the quality they value most in themselves. But the country girl was too many for them: she would neither see nor hear, but moved sedately on, and calmly crushed them

with her Southern beauty. Their dry, powdered faces could not live by the side of her glowing skin, with nature's delicate gloss upon it, and the rich blood mantling below it. The got-up beauties, *i.e.*, the majority, seemed literally to fade and wither as she passed.

Mrs. Lucas got to her, suppressed a slight maternal pang, having daughters to marry, and took her line in a moment; here was a decoy duck. Mrs. Lucas was all graciousness, made acquaintance, and took a little turn with her, introducing her to one or two persons; among the rest, to the malignant woman, Mrs. Barr. Mrs. Barr, on this, ceased to look daggers and substituted icicles; but on the hateful beauty moving away, dropped the icicles, and resumed the poniards.

The rooms filled; the heat became oppressive, and the mixed odors of flowers, scents, and perspiring humanity, sickening. Some, unable to bear it, trickled out of the room, and sat all down the stairs.

Rosa began to feel faint. Up came a tall, sprightly girl, whose pertness was redeemed by a certain *bonhomie*, and said, "Mrs. Staines, I believe? I am to make myself agreeable to you. That is the order from headquarters."

"Miss Lucas," said Staines.

She jerked a little off-hand bow to him, and said, "Will you trust her to me for five minutes?"

"Certainly." But he did not much like it.

Miss Lucas carried her off, and told Dr. Staines, over her shoulder, now he could flirt to his heart's content.

"Thank you," said he dryly. "I'll await your return."

"Oh, there are some much greater flirts here than I am," said the ready Miss Lucas; and whispering something in Mrs. Staines's ear, suddenly glided with her behind a curtain, pressed a sort of button fixed to a looking-glass door. The door opened, and behold they

were in a delicious place, for which I can hardly find a word, since it was a boudoir and a conservatory in one: a large octagon, the walls lined from floor to ceiling with looking-glasses of moderate width, at intervals, and with creepers that covered the intervening spaces of the wall, and were trained so as to break the outline of the glasses without greatly clouding the reflection. Ferns, in great variety, were grouped in a deep crescent, and in the bight of this green bay were a small table and chairs. As there were no hot-house plants, the temperature was very cool, compared with the reeking oven they had escaped; and a little fountain bubbled, and fed a little meandering gutter that trickled away among the ferns; it ran crystal clear over little bright pebbles and shells. It did not always run, you understand; but Miss Lucas turned a secret tap, and started it.

"Oh, how heavenly!" said Rosa, with a sigh of relief; "and how good of you to bring me here!"

"Yes; by rights I ought to have waited till you fainted. But there is no making acquaintance among all those people. Mamma will ask such crowds; one is like a fly in a glue-pot."

Miss Lucas had good nature, smartness, and animal spirits; hence arose a vivacity and fluency that were often amusing, and passed for very clever. Reserve she had none; would talk about strangers, or friends, herself, her mother, her God, and the last buffoon-singer, in a breath. At a hint from Rosa, she told her who the lady in the pink dress was, and the lady in the violet velvet, and so on; for each lady was defined by her dress, and, more or less, quizzed by this show-woman, not exactly out of malice, but because it is smarter and more natural to decry than to praise, and a little *médisance* is the spice to gossip, belongs to it, as mint sauce to lamb. So they chatted away, and were pleased with each other,

and made friends, and there, in cool grot, quite forgot the sufferings of their fellow-creatures in the adjacent Turkish bath, yclept society. It was Rosa who first recollected herself. "Will not Mrs. Lucas be angry with me, if I keep you all to myself?"

"Oh no; but I'm afraid we must go into the hot-house again. I like the greenhouse best, with such a nice companion."

They slipped noiselessly into the throng again, and wriggled about, Miss Lucas presenting her new friend to several ladies and gentlemen.

Presently Staines found them, and then Miss Lucas wriggled away; and in due course the room was thinned by many guests driving off home, or to balls, and other receptions, and Dr. Staines and Mrs. Staines went home to the Bijou. Here the physician prescribed bed; but the lady would not hear of such a thing until she had talked it all over. So they compared notes, and Rosa told him how well she had got on with Miss Lucas, and made a friendship. "But for that," said she, "I should be sorry I went among those people, such a dowdy."

"Dowdy!" said Staines. "Why, you stormed the town; you were the great success of the night, and, for all I know, of the season." The wretch delivered this with unbecoming indifference.

"It is too bad to mock me, Christie. Where were your eyes?"

"To the best of my recollection, they were one on each side of my nose."

"Yes, but some people are eyes and no eyes."

"I scorn the imputation; try me."

"Very well. Then did you see that lady in sky-blue silk, embroidered with flowers, and flounced with white velvet, and the corsage point lace; and oh, such emeralds?"

"I did; a tall, skinny woman, with eyes resembling her jewels in color, though not in brightness."

"Never mind her eyes; it is her dress I am speaking of. Exquisite; and what a coiffure! Well, did you see *her* in the black velvet, trimmed so deep with Chantilly lace, wave on wave, and her head-dress of crimson flowers, and such a *rivière* of diamonds; oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"I did, love. The room was an oven, but her rubicund face and suffocating costume made it seem a furnace."

"Stuff! Well, did you see the lady in the corn-colored silk, and poppies in her hair?"

"Of course I did. Ceres in person. She made me feel hot, too; but I cooled myself a bit at her pale, sickly face."

"Never mind their faces; that is not the point."

"Oh, excuse me; it is always a point with us benighted males, all eyes and no eyes."

"Well, then, the lady in white, with cherry-velvet bands, and a white tunic looped with crimson, and head-dress of white illusion, *à la vierge*, I think they call it."

"It was very refreshing; and adapted to that awful atmosphere. It was the nearest approach to nudity I ever saw, even amongst fashionable people."

"It was lovely; and then that superb figure in white illusion and gold, with all those narrow flounces over her slip of white silk *glacée*, and a wreath of white flowers, with gold wheat ears amongst them, in her hair; and oh! oh! oh! her pearls, oriental, and as big as almonds!"

"And oh! oh! oh! her nose! reddish, and as long as a woodcock's."

"Noses! noses! stupid! That is not what strikes you first in a woman dressed like an angel."

"Well, if you were to run up against that one, as I

nearly did, her nose *would* be the thing that would strike you first. Nose! it was a rostrum! the spear-head of Goliah."

"Now, don't, Christopher. This is no laughing matter. Do you mean you were not ashamed of your wife? I was."

"No, I was not; you had but one rival; a very young lady, wise before her age; a blonde, with violet eyes. She was dressed in light mauve-colored silk, without a single flounce, or any other tomfoolery to fritter away the sheen and color of an exquisite material; her sunny hair was another wave of color, wreathed with a thin line of white jessamine flowers closely woven, that scented the air. This girl was the moon of that assembly, and you were the sun."

"I never even saw her."

"Eyes and no eyes. She saw you, and said, 'Oh, what a beautiful creature!' for I heard her. As for the old stagers, whom you admire so, their faces were all clogged with powder, the pores stopped up, the true texture of the skin abolished. They looked downright nasty, whenever you or that young girl passed by them. Then it was you saw to what a frightful extent women are got up in our day, even young women, and respectable women. No, Rosa, dress can do little for you; you have beauty — real beauty."

"Beauty! That passes unnoticed, unless one is well dressed."

"Then what an obscure pair the Apollo Belvidere and the Venus de Medicis must be."

"Oh! they are dressed — in marble."

Christopher Staines stared first, then smiled.

"Well done," said he, admiringly. "That *is* a knock-down blow. So now you have silenced your husband, go you to bed directly. I can't afford you diamonds; so

I will take care of that little insignificant trifle, your beauty."

Mrs. Staines and Mrs. Lucas exchanged calls, and soon Mrs. Staines could no longer complain she was out of the world. Mrs. Lucas invited her to every party, because her beauty was an instrument of attraction she knew how to use; and Miss Lucas took a downright fancy to her; drove her in the park, and on Sundays to the Zoölogical Gardens, just beginning to be fashionable.

The Lucases rented a box at the opera, and if it was not let at the library by six o'clock, and if other engagements permitted, word was sent round to Mrs. Staines, as a matter of course, and she was taken to the opera. She began almost to live at the Lucases, and to be oftener fatigued than moped.

The usual order of things was inverted; the maiden lady educated the matron; for Miss Lucas knew all about everybody in the Park, honorable or dishonorable; all the scandals, and all the flirtations; and whatever she knew, she related point-blank. Being as inquisitive as voluble, she soon learned how Mrs. Staines and her husband were situated. She took upon her to advise her in many things, and especially impressed upon her that Dr. Staines must keep a carriage, if he wanted to get on in medicine. The piece of advice accorded so well with Rosa's wishes, that she urged it on her husband again and again.

He objected that no money was coming in, and therefore it would be insane to add to their expenses. Rosa persisted, and at last worried Staines with her importunity. He began to give rather short answers. Then she quoted Miss Lucas against him. He treated the authority with marked contempt; and then Rosa fired up a little. Then Staines held his peace; but did not buy a carriage to visit his no patients.

So at last Rosa complained to Lady Cicely Treherne, and made her the judge between her husband and herself. Lady Cicely drawled out a prompt but polite refusal to play that part. All that could be elicited from her, and that with difficulty, was, "Why quall with your husband about a cawwige; he is your best fwiend."

"Ah, that he is," said Rosa; "but Miss Lucas is a good friend, and she knows the world. We don't; neither Christopher nor I."

So she continued to nag at her husband about it, and to say that he was throwing his only chance away.

Galled as he was by neglect, this was irritating, and at last he could not help telling her she was unreasonable. "You live a gay life, and I a sad one. I consent to this, and let you go about with these Lucases, because you were so dull; but you should not consult them in our private affairs. Their interference is indelicate and improper. I will not set up a carriage till I have patients to visit. I am sick of seeing our capital dwindle, and no income created. I will never set up a carriage till I have taken a hundred-guinea fee."

"Oh! Then we shall go splashing through the mud all our days."

"Or ride in a cab," said Christopher, with a quiet doggedness that left no hope of his yielding.

One afternoon Miss Lucas called for Mrs. Staines to drive in the Park, but did not come up-stairs; it was an engagement, and she knew Mrs. Staines would be ready, or nearly. Mrs. Staines, not to keep her waiting, came down rather hastily, and in the very passage whipped out of her pocket a little glass, and a little powder puff, and puffed her face all over in a trice. She was then going out; but her husband called her into the study. "Rosa, my dear," said he, "you were going out with a dirty face."

"Oh!" cried she, "give me a glass."

"There is no need of that. All you want is a basin and some nice rain-water. I keep a little reservoir of it."

He then handed her the same with great politeness. She looked in his eye, and saw he was not to be trifled with. She complied like a lamb, and the heavenly color and velvet gloss that resulted were admirable.

He kissed her and said, "Ah! now you are my Rosa again. Oblige me by handing over that powder-puff to me." She looked vexed, but complied. "When you come back I will tell you why."

"You are a pest," said Mrs. Staines, and so joined her friend, rosy with rain-water and a rub.

"Dear me, how handsome you look to-day!" was Miss Lucas's first remark.

Rosa never dreamed that rain-water and rub could be the cause of her looking so well.

"It is my tiresome husband," said she. "He objects to powder, and he has taken away my puff."

"And you stood that?"

"Obliged to."

"Why, you poor-spirited little creature, I should like to see a husband presume to interfere with me in those things. Here, take mine."

Rosa hesitated a little. "Well — no — I think not."

Miss Lucas laughed at her, and quizzed her so on her allowing a man to interfere in such sacred things as dress and cosmetics, that she came back irritated with her husband, and gave him a short answer or two. Then he asked what was the matter.

"You treat me like a child — taking away my very puff."

"I treat you like a beautiful flower, that no bad gardener shall wither whilst I am here."

"What nonsense! How could that wither me? It is only violet powder — what they put on babies."

"And who are the Herods that put it on babies?"

"Their own mothers, that love them ten times more than the fathers do."

"And kill a hundred of them for one a man ever kills. Mothers! — the most wholesale homicides in the nation. We will examine your violet-powder: bring it down here."

While she was gone he sent for a breakfast-cupful of flour, and when she came back he had his scales out, and begged her to put a teaspoonful of flour into one scale and of violet powder into another. The flour kicked the beam, as Homer expresses himself.

"Put another spoonful of flour."

The one spoonful of violet powder outweighed the two of flour.

"Now," said Staines, "does not that show you the presence of a mineral in your vegetable powder? I suppose they tell you it is made of white violets dried, and triturated in a diamond mill. Let us find out what metal it is. We need not go very deep into chemistry for that." He then applied a simple test, and detected the presence of lead in large quantities. Then he lectured her: "Invisible perspiration is a process of nature necessary to health and to life. The skin is made porous for that purpose. You can kill anybody in an hour or two by closing the pores. A certain infallible ass, called Pope Leo XII., killed a little boy in two hours, by gilding him to adorn the pageant of his first procession as Pope. But what is death to the whole body must be injurious to a part. What madness, then, to clog the pores of so large and important a surface as the face, and check the invisible perspiration: how much more to insert lead into your system every day of your

life; a cumulative poison, and one so deadly and so subtle, that the Sheffield file-cutters die in their prime, from merely hammering on a leaden anvil. And what do you gain by this suicidal habit? No plum has a sweeter bloom or more delicious texture than the skin of your young face; but this mineral filth hides that delicate texture, and substitutes a dry, uniform appearance, more like a certain kind of leprosy than health. Nature made your face the rival of peaches, roses, lilies; and you say, 'No; I know better than my Creator and my God; my face shall be like a dusty miller's.' Go into any flour-mill, and there you shall see men with faces exactly like your friend Miss Lucas's. But before a miller goes to his sweetheart, he always washes his face. You ladies would never get a miller down to your level in brains. It is a miller's *dirty* face our monomaniacs of woman imitate, not the face a miller goes a-courting with."

"La! what a fuss about nothing!"

"About nothing! Is your health nothing? Is your beauty nothing? Well, then, it will cost you nothing to promise me never to put powder on your face again."

"Very well, I promise. Now what will you do for me?"

"Work for you — write for you — suffer for you — be self-denying for you — and even give myself the pain of disappointing you now and then — looking forward to the time when I shall be able to say 'Yes' to everything you ask me. Ah! child, you little know what it costs me to say 'No' to *you*."

Rosa put her arms round him and acquiesced. She was one of those who go with the last speaker; but, for that very reason, the eternal companionship of so flighty and flirty a girl as Miss Lucas was injurious to her.

One day Lady Cicely Treherne was sitting with Mrs.

Staines, smiling languidly at her talk, and occasionally drawling out a little plain good sense, when in came Miss Lucas, with her tongue well hung, as usual, and dashed into twenty topics in ten minutes.

This young lady in her discourse was like those little oily beetles you see in small ponds, whose whole life is spent in tacking — confound them for it! — generally at right angles. What they are in navigation was Miss Lucas in conversation: tacked so eternally from topic to topic, that no man on earth, and not every woman, could follow her.

At the sight and sound of her, Lady Cicely congealed and stiffened. Easy and unpretending with Mrs. Staines, she was all dignity, and even majesty, in the presence of this chatterbox; and the smoothness with which the transfiguration was accomplished marked that accomplished actress the high-bred woman of the world.

Rosa, better able to estimate the change of manner than Miss Lucas was, who did not know how little this Sawny was afflicted with misplaced dignity, looked wistfully and distressed at her. Lady Cicely smiled kindly in reply, rose, without seeming to hurry, — catch her condescending to be rude to Charlotte Lucas, — and took her departure, with a profound and most gracious courtesy to the lady who had driven her away.

Mrs. Staines saw her down-stairs, and said, ruefully, "I am afraid you do not like my friend Miss Lucas. She is a great rattle, but so good-natured and clever."

Lady Cicely shook her head. "Clevaa people don't talk so much nonsense before strangaas."

"Oh, dear!" said Rosa. "I was in hopes you would like her."

"Do *you* like her?"

"Indeed I do; but I shall not, if she drives an older friend away."

"My dyah, I'm not easily dwiven from those I esteem. But you undastand that is not a woman for me to mispwonownce my 'ah's befaw — NOR FOR YOU TO MAKE A BOSOM FWIEND OF — WOSA STAINES."

She said this with a sudden maternal solemnity and kindness that contrasted nobly and strangely with her yea-nay style, and Mrs. Staines remembered the words years after they were spoken.

It so happened that after this Mrs. Staines received no more visits from Lady Cicely for some time, and that vexed her. She knew her sex enough to be aware that they are very jealous, and she permitted herself to think that this high-minded Sawny was jealous of Miss Lucas.

This idea, founded on a general estimate of her sex, was dispelled by a few lines from Lady Cicely, to say her family and herself were in deep distress; her brother, Lord Ayscough, lay dying from an accident.

Then Rosa was all remorse, and ran down to Staines to tell him. She found him with an open letter in his hand. It was from Dr. Barr, and on the same subject. The doctor, who had always been friendly to him, invited him to come down at once to Hallowtree Hall, in Huntingdonshire, to a consultation. There was a friendly intimation to start at once, as the patient might die any moment.

Husband and wife embraced each other in a tumult of surprised thankfulness. A few necessaries were thrown into a carpet-bag, and Dr. Staines was soon whirled into Huntingdonshire. Having telegraphed beforehand, he was met at the station by the earl's carriage and people, and driven to the Hall. He was received by an old, silver-haired butler, looking very sad, who conducted him to a boudoir; and then went and tapped gently at the door of the patient's room. It was opened and shut very

softly, and Lady Cicely, dressed in black, and looking paler than ever, came into the room.

"Dr. Staines, I think?"

He bowed.

"Thank you for coming so promptly. Dr. Barr is gone. I fear he thinks — he thinks — O Dr. Staines — no sign of life but in his poor hands, that keep moving night and day."

Staines looked very grave at that. Lady Cicely observed it, and, faint at heart, could say no more, but led the way to the sick-room.

There in a spacious chamber, lighted by a grand oriel window and two side windows, lay rank, title, wealth, and youth, stricken down in a moment by a common accident. The sufferer's face was bloodless, his eyes fixed, and no signs of life but in his thumbs, and they kept working with strange regularity.

In the room were a nurse and the surgeon; the neighboring physician, who had called in Dr. Barr, had just paid his visit and gone away.

Lady Cicely introduced Dr. Staines and Mr. White, and then Dr. Staines stood and fixed his eyes on the patient in profound silence. Lady Cicely scanned his countenance searchingly, and was struck with the extraordinary power and intensity it assumed in examining the patient; but the result was not encouraging. Dr. Staines looked grave and gloomy.

At last, without removing his eye from the recumbent figure, he said quietly to Mr. White, "Thrown from his horse, sir."

"Horse fell on him, Dr. Staines."

"Any visible injuries?"

"Yes. Severe contusions, and a rib broken and pressed upon the lungs. I replaced and set it. Will you see?"

"If you please."

He examined and felt the patient, and said it had been ably done.

Then he was silent and searching.

At last he spoke again. "The motion of the thumbs corresponds exactly with his pulse."

"Is that so, sir?"

"It is. The case is without a parallel. How long has he been so?"

"Nearly a week."

"Impossible!"

"It is so, sir."

Lady Cicely confirmed this.

"All the better," said Dr. Staines upon reflection. "Well, sir," said he, "the visible injuries having been ably relieved, I shall look another way for the cause." Then, after another pause, "I must have his head shaved."

Lady Cicely demurred a little to this; but Dr. Staines stood firm, and his lordship's valet undertook the job.

Staines directed him where to begin; and when he had made a circular tonsure on the top of the head, had it sponged with tepid water.

"I thought so," said he. "Here is the mischief;" and he pointed to a very slight indentation on the left side of the pia mater. "Observe," said he, "there is no corresponding indentation on the other side. Underneath this trifling depression a minute piece of bone is doubtless pressing on the most sensitive part of the brain. He must be trephined."

Mr. White's eyes sparkled.

"You are an hospital surgeon, sir?"

"Yes, Dr. Staines. I have no fear of the operation."

"Then I hand the patient over to you. The case at present is entirely surgical."

White was driven home, and soon returned with the requisite instruments. The operation was neatly performed, and then Lady Cicely was called in. She came trembling; her brother's fingers were still working, but not so regularly.

"That is only *habit*," said Staines; "it will soon leave off, now the cause is gone."

And, truly enough, in about five minutes the fingers became quiet. The eyes became human next; and within half an hour after the operation the earl gave a little sigh.

Lady Cicely clasped her hands, and uttered a little cry of delight.

"This will not do," said Staines, "I shall have you screaming when he speaks."

"Oh, Dr. Staines! will he ever speak?"

"I think so, and very soon. So be on your guard."

This strange scene reached its climax soon after, by the earl saying, quietly, —

"Are her knees broke, Tom?"

Lady Cicely uttered a little scream, but instantly suppressed it.

"No, my lord," said Staines, smartly; "only rubbed a bit. You can go to sleep, my lord. I'll take care of the mare."

"All right," said his lordship; and composed himself to slumber.

Dr. Staines, at the earnest request of Lady Cicely, stayed all night; and in course of the day advised her how to nurse the patient, since both physician and surgeon had done with him.

He said the patient's brain might be irritable for some days, and no women in silk dresses or crinoline, or creaking shoes, must enter the room. He told her the nurse was evidently a clumsy woman, and would be letting

things fall. She had better get some old soldier used to nursing. "And don't whisper in the room," said he; "nothing irritates them worse; and don't let anybody play a piano within hearing; but in a day or two you may try him with slow and continuous music on the flute or violin if you like. Don't touch his bed suddenly; don't sit on it or lean on it. Dole sunlight into his room by degrees; and when he can bear it, drench him with it. Never mind what the old school tell you. About these things they know a good deal less than nothing."

Lady Cicely received all this like an oracle.

The cure was telegraphed to Dr. Barr, and he was requested to settle the fee. He was not the man to undersell the profession, and was jealous of nobody, having a large practice, and a very wealthy wife. So he telegraphed back — "Fifty guineas, and a guinea a mile from London."

So, as Christopher Staines sat at an early breakfast, with the carriage waiting to take him to the train, two notes were brought him on a salver.

They were both directed by Lady Cicely Treherne. One of them contained a few kind and feeling words of gratitude and esteem; the other, a check, drawn by the earl's steward, for one hundred and thirty guineas.

He bowled up to London, and told it all to Rosa. She sparkled with pride, affection, and joy.

"Now, who says you are not a genius?" she cried. "A hundred and thirty guineas for one fee! Now, if you love your wife as she loves you — you will set up a brougham."

CHAPTER VIII.

Doctor Staines begged leave to distinguish; he had not said he would set up a carriage at the first one hundred guinea fee, but only that he would not set up one before. There are misguided people who would call this logic: but Rosa said it was equivocating, and urged him so warmly that at last he burst out, "Who can go on forever saying 'No,' to the only creature he loves?" — and caved. In forty-eight hours more a brougham waited at Mrs. Staines's door. The servant engaged to drive it was Andrew Pearman, a bachelor, and, hitherto, an under-groom. He readily consented to be coachman, and to do certain domestic work as well. So Mrs. Staines had a man-servant as well as a carriage.

Ere long, three or four patients called, or wrote, one after the other. These Rosa set down to brougham, and crowed; she even crowed to Lady Cicely Treherne, to whose influence, and not to brougham's, every one of these patients was owing. Lady Cicely kissed her, and demurely enjoyed the poor soul's self-satisfaction.

Staines himself, while he drove to or from these patients, felt more sanguine, and buoyed as he was by the consciousness of ability, began to hope he had turned the corner.

He sent an account of Lord Ayscough's case to a medical magazine: and so full is the world of flunkeyism, that this article, though he withheld the name, retaining only the title, got the literary wedge in for him at once: and in due course he became a paid contributor to two medical organs, and used to study and

write more, and indent the little stone yard less than heretofore.

It was about this time circumstances made him acquainted with Phœbe Dale. Her intermediate history I will dispose of in fewer words than it deserves. Her ruin, Mr. Reginald Falcon, was dismissed from his club, for marking high cards on the back with his nail. This stopped his remaining resource — borrowing: so he got more and more out at elbows, till at last he came down to hanging about billiard-rooms, and making a little money by concealing his game; from that, however, he rose to be a marker.

Having culminated to that, he wrote and proposed marriage to Miss Dale, in a charming letter: she showed it to her father with pride.

Now, if his vanity, his disloyalty, his falsehood, his ingratitude, and his other virtues had not stood in the way, he would have done this three years ago, and been jumped at.

But the offer came too late; not for Phœbe — she would have taken him in a moment — but for her friends. A baited hook is one thing, a bare hook is another. Farmer Dale had long discovered where Phœbe's money went: he said not a word to her; but went up to town like a shot; found Falcon out, and told him he mustn't think to eat his daughter's bread. She should marry a man that could make a decent livelihood; and if she was to run away with *him*, why they'd starve together. The farmer was resolute, and spoke very loud, like one that expects opposition, and comes prepared to quarrel. Instead of that, this artful rogue addressed him with deep respect and an affected veneration, that quite puzzled the old man; acquiesced in every word, expressed contrition for his past misdeeds, and told the farmer he had quite determined to labor with his hands. "You

know, farmer," said he, "I am not the only gentleman who has come to that in the present day. Now, all my friends that have seen my sketches, assure me I am a born painter; and a painter I'll be — for love of Phœbe."

The farmer made a wry face. "Painter! that is a sorry sort of a trade."

"You are mistaken. It's the best trade going. There are gentlemen making their thousands a year by it."

"Not in our parts, there bain't. Stop a bit. What be ye going to paint, sir? Housen, or folk?"

"Oh, hang it, not houses. Figures, landscapes."

"Well, ye might just make shift to live at it, I suppose, with here and there a signboard. They are the best paid, our way: but, Lord bless ye, *they* wants headpiece. Well, sir, let me see your work. Then we'll talk further."

"I'll go to work this afternoon," said Falcon eagerly; then with affected surprise, "Bless me; I forgot. I have no palette, no canvas, no colors. You couldn't lend me a couple of sovereigns to buy them, could you?"

"Ay, sir; I could. But I woan't. I'll lend ye the things, though, if you have a mind to go with me and buy 'em."

Falcon agreed, with a lofty smile; and the purchases were made.

Mr. Falcon painted a landscape or two out of his imagination. The dealers to whom he took them declined them; one advised the gentleman painter to color tea-boards. "That's your line," said he.

"The world has no taste," said the gentleman painter: "but it has got lots of vanity: I'll paint portraits."

He did; and formidable ones: his portraits were amazingly like the people, and yet unlike men and women, especially about the face. One thing, he didn't trouble with lights and shades, but went slap at the features.

His brush would never have kept him; but he carried an instrument, in the use of which he was really an artist, viz., his tongue. By wheedling and underselling — for he only charged a pound for the painted canvas — he contrived to live; then he aspired to dress as well as live. With this second object in view, he hit upon a characteristic expedient.

He used to prowl about, and when he saw a young woman sweeping the afternoon streets with a long silk train, and, in short, dressed to ride in the park, yet parading the streets, he would take his hat off to her, with an air of profound respect, and ask permission to take her portrait. Generally he met a prompt rebuff; but if the fair was so unlucky as to hesitate a single moment, he told her a melting tale; he had once driven his four-in-hand; but by indorsing his friends' bills, was reduced to painting likeness, admirable likenesses in oil, only a guinea each.

His piteous tale provoked more gibes than pity, but as he had no shame, the rebuffs went for nothing: he actually did get a few sitters by his audacity: and some of the sitters actually took the pictures, and paid for them; others declined them with fury as soon as they were finished. These he took back with a piteous sigh, that sometimes extracted half a crown. Then he painted over the rejected one and let it dry; so that sometimes a paid portrait would present a beauty enthroned on the débris of two or three rivals, and that is where few beauties would object to sit.

All this time he wrote nice letters to Phœbe, and adopted the tone of the struggling artist, and the true lover, who wins his bride by patience, perseverance, and indomitable industry; a babbled of "Self Help."

Meantime, Phœbe was not idle: an excellent business woman, she took immediate advantage of a new station

that was built near the farm, to send up milk, butter, and eggs to London. Being genuine, they sold like wildfire. Observing that, she extended her operations, by buying of other farmers, and forwarding to London: and then, having of course an eye to her struggling artist, she told her father she must have a shop in London, and somebody in it she could depend upon.

"With all my heart, wench," said he; "but it must not be thou. I can't spare thee."

"May I have Dick, father?"

"Dick! he is rather young."

"But he is very quick, father, and minds every word I tell him."

"Ay, he is as fond of thee as ever a cow was of a calf. Well, you can try him."

So the love-sick woman of business set up a little shop, and put her brother Dick in it, and all to see more of her struggling artist. She stayed several days, to open the little shop, and start the business. She advertised pure milk, and challenged scientific analysis of everything she sold. This came of her being a reader; she knew, by the journals, that we live in a sinful and adulterating generation, and anything pure must be a godsend to the poor poisoned public.

Now, Dr. Staines, though known to the profession as a diagnost, was also an analyst, and this challenge brought him down on Phœbe Dale. He told her he was a physician, and in search of pure food for his own family —would she really submit the milk to analysis?

Phœbe smiled an honest country smile, and said, "Surely, sir." She gave him every facility, and he applied those simple tests which are commonly used in France, though hardly known in England.

He found it perfectly pure, and told her so; and gazed at Phœbe for a moment, as a phenomenon.

She smiled again at that, her broad country smile. "That is a wonder in London, I dare say. It's my belief half the children that die here are perished with watered milk. Well, sir, we shan't have that on our souls, father and I; he is a farmer in Essex. This comes a many miles, this milk."

Staines looked in her face, with kindly approval marked on his own eloquent features. She blushed a little at so fixed a regard. Then he asked her if she would supply him with milk, butter, and eggs.

"Why, if you mean sell you them, yes, sir, with pleasure. But for sending them home to you in this big town, as some do, I can't; for there's only brother Dick and me: it is an experiment like."

"Very well," said Staines: "I will send for them."

"Thank you kindly, sir. I hope you won't be offended, sir; but we only sell for ready money."

"All the better: my order at home is, no bills."

When he was gone, Phœbe, assuming vast experience, though this was only her third day, told Dick that was one of the right sort: "and oh, Dick," said she, "did you notice his eye?"

"Not particklar, sister."

"There now; the boy is blind. Why, 'twas like a jewel. Such an eye I never saw in a man's head, nor a woman's neither."

Staines told his wife about Phœbe and her brother, and spoke of her with a certain admiration that raised Rosa's curiosity, and even that sort of vague jealousy that fires at bare praise. "I should like to see this phenomenon," said she. "You shall," said he. "I have to call on Mrs. Manly. She lives near. I will drop you at the little shop, and come back for you."

He did so, and that gave Rosa a quarter of an hour to make her purchases. When he came back he found

her conversing with Phœbe, as if they were old friends, and Dick glaring at his wife with awe and admiration. He could hardly get her away.

She was far more extravagant in her praises than Dr. Staines had been. "What a good creature!" said she. "And how clever! To think of her setting up a shop like that all by herself; for her Dick is only seventeen."

Dr. Staines recommended the little shop wherever he went, and even extended its operations. He asked Phœbe to get her own wheat ground at home, and send the flour up in bushel bags. "These assassins, the bakers," said he, "are putting copper into the flour now, as well as alum. Pure flour is worth a fancy price to any family. With that we can make the bread of life. What you buy in the shops is the bread of death."

Dick was a good, sharp boy, devoted to his sister. He stuck to the shop in London, and handed the money to Phœbe, when she came for it. She worked for it in Essex, and extended her country connection for supply as the retail business increased.

Staines wrote an article on pure food, and incidentally mentioned the shop as a place where flour, milk, and butter were to be had pure. This article was published in the *Lancet*, and caused quite a run upon the little shop. By and by Phœbe enlarged it, for which there were great capabilities, and made herself a pretty little parlor, and there she and Dick sat to Falcon for their portraits; here, too, she hung his rejected landscapes. They were fair in her eyes; what matter whether they were like nature? his hand had painted them. She knew, from him, that everybody else had rejected them. With all the more pride and love did she have them framed in gold, and hung up with the portraits in her little sanctum.

For a few months Phœbe Dale was as happy as she deserved to be. Her lover was working, and faithful to her — at least she saw no reason to doubt it. He came to see her every evening, and seemed devoted to her: would sit quietly with her, or walk with her, or take her to a play, or a music-hall — at her expense.

She now lived in a quiet elysium, with a bright and rapturous dream of the future; for she saw she had hit on a good vein of business, and should soon be independent, and able to indulge herself with a husband, and ask no man's leave.

She sent to Essex for a dairymaid, and set her to churn milk into butter, *coram populo*, at a certain hour every morning. This made a new sensation. At other times the woman was employed to deliver milk and cream to a few favored customers.

Mrs. Staines dropped in now and then, and chatted with her. Her sweet face and her *naïveté* won Phœbe's heart; and one day, as happiness is apt to be communicative, she let out to her, in reply to a feeler or two as to whether she was quite alone, that she was engaged to be married to a gentleman. "But he is not rich, ma'am," said Phœbe plaintively; "he has had trouble: obliged to work for his living, like me; he painted these pictures, *every one of them.* If it was not making too free, and you could spare a guinea — he charges no more for the picture, only you must go to the expense of the frame."

"Of course I will," said Rosa warmly. "I'll sit for it here, any day you like."

Now, Rosa said this, out of her ever ready kindness, not to wound Phœbe: but having made the promise, she kept clear of the place for some days, hoping Phœbe would forget all about it. Meantime she sent her husband to buy.

In about a fortnight she called again, primed with evasions if she should be asked to sit; but nothing of the kind was proposed. Phœbe was dealing when she went in. The customers disposed of, she said to Mrs. Staines, "Oh, ma'am, I am glad you are come. I have something I should like to show you." She took her into the parlor, and made her sit down: then she opened a drawer, and took out a very small substance that looked like a tear of ground glass, and put it on the table before her. "There, ma'am," said she, "that is all he has had for painting a friend's picture."

"Oh! what a shame."

"His friend was going abroad — to Natal; to his uncle that farms out there, and does very well; it is a first-rate part, if you take out a little stock with you, and some money; so my one gave him credit, and when the letter came with that postmark, he counted on a five-pound note; but the letter only said he had got no money yet, but sent him something as a keepsake: and there was this little stone. Poor fellow! he flung it down in a passion; he was so disappointed."

Phœbe's great gray eyes filled; and Rosa gave a little coo of sympathy that was very womanly and lovable.

Phœbe leaned her cheek on her hand, and said thoughtfully, "I picked it up, and brought it away; for, after all — don't you think, ma'am, it is very strange that a friend should send it all that way, if it was worth nothing at all?"

"It is impossible. He could not be so heartless."

"And do you know, ma'am, when I take it up in my fingers, it doesn't feel like a thing that was worth nothing."

"No more it does: it makes my fingers tremble. May I take it home, and show it my husband? he is a great physician and knows everything."

"I am sure I should be obliged to you, ma'am."

Rosa drove home, on purpose to show it to Christopher. She ran into his study: "Oh, Christopher, please look at that. You know that good creature we have our flour and milk and things of. She is is engaged, and he is a painter. Oh, such daubs! He painted a friend, and the friend sent that home all the way from Natal, and he dashed it down, and *she* picked it up, and what is it? ground glass, or a pebble, or what?"

"Humph! — by its shape, and the great — brilliancy — and refraction of light, on this angle, where the stone has got polished by rubbing against other stones, in the course of ages, I'm inclined to think it is — a diamond."

"A diamond!" shrieked Rosa. "No wonder my fingers trembled. Oh, can it be? Oh, you good, cold-blooded Christie! — Poor things! — Come along, Diamond! Oh you beauty! Oh you duck!"

"Don't be in such a hurry. I only said I thought it was a diamond. Let me weigh it against water, and then I shall *know*."

He took it to his little laboratory, and returned in a few minutes, and said, "Yes. It is just three times and a half heavier than water. It is a diamond."

"Are you positive?"

"I'll stake my existence."

"What is it worth?"

"My dear, I'm not a jeweller: but it is very large and pear-shaped, and I see no flaw: I don't think you could buy it for less than three hundred pounds."

"Three hundred pounds! It is worth three hundred pounds."

"Or sell it for more than a hundred and fifty pounds."

"A hundred and fifty! It is worth a hundred and fifty pounds."

"Why, my dear, one would think you had invented 'the diamond.' Show me how to crystallize carbon, and I will share your enthusiasm."

"Oh, I leave you to carbonize crystal. I prefer to gladden hearts: and I will do it this minute, with my diamond."

"Do, dear; and I will take that opportunity to finish my article on Adulteration."

Rosa drove off to Phœbe Dale.

Now Phœbe was drinking tea with Reginald Falcon, in her little parlor. "Who is that, I wonder?" said she, when the carriage drew up.

Reginald drew back a corner of the gauze curtain which had been drawn across the little glass door leading from the shop.

"It is a lady, and a beautiful — Oh! let me get out." And he rushed out at the door leading to the kitchen, not to be recognized.

This set Phœbe all in a flutter, and the next moment Mrs. Staines tapped at the little door, then opened it, and peeped. "Good news! may I come in?"

"Surely," said Phœbe, still troubled and confused by Reginald's strange agitation.

"There! It is a diamond!" screamed Rosa. "My husband knew it directly. He knows everything. If ever you are ill, go to him and nobody else — by the refraction, and the angle, and its being three times and a half as heavy as water. It is worth three hundred pounds to buy, and a hundred and fifty pounds to sell."

"Oh!"

"So don't you go throwing it away, as he did. (In a whisper.) Two teacups? Was that him? I have driven him away. I am so sorry. I'll go; and then you can tell him. Poor fellow!"

"Oh, ma'am, don't go yet," said Phœbe, trembling. "I haven't half thanked you."

"Oh, bother thanks. Kiss me; that is the way."

"May I?"

"You may, and must. There — and there — and there. Oh dear, what nice things good luck and happiness are, and how sweet to bring them for once."

Upon this Phœbe and she had a nice little cry together, and Mrs. Staines went off refreshed thereby, and as gay as a lark, pointing slyly at the door, and making faces to Phœbe that she knew he was there, and she only retired, out of her admirable discretion, that they might enjoy the diamond together.

When she was gone, Reginald, whose eye and ear had been at the keyhole, alternately gloating on the face and drinking the accents of the only woman he had ever really loved, came out, looking pale, and strangely disturbed; and sat down at table, without a word.

Phœbe came back to him, full of the diamond. "Did you hear what she said, my dear? It is a diamond; it is worth a hundred and fifty pounds at least. Why, what ails you? Ah! to be sure! you know that lady."

"I have cause to know her. Cursed jilt!"

"You seem a good deal put out at the sight of her."

"It took me by surprise, that is all."

"It takes me by surprise too. I thought you were cured. I thought *my* turn had come at last."

Reginald met this in sullen silence. Then Phœbe was sorry she had said it; for, after all, it wasn't the man's fault if an old sweetheart had run into the room, and given him a start. So she made him some fresh tea, and pressed him kindly to try her home-made bread and butter.

My lord relaxed his frown and consented, and of course they talked diamond.

He told her, loftily, he must take a studio, and his sitters must come to him, and must no longer expect to be immortalized for one pound. It must be two pounds for a bust, and three pounds for a kitcat.

"Nay, but, my dear," said Phœbe, "they will pay no more because you have a diamond."

"Then they will have to go unpainted," said Mr. Falcon.

This was intended for a threat. Phœbe instinctively felt that it might not be so received; she counselled moderation. "It is a great thing to have earned a diamond," said she: "but 'tis only once in a life. Now, be ruled by me: go on just as you are. Sell the diamond, and give me the money to keep for you. Why, you might add a little to it, and so would I, till we made it up two hundred pounds. And if you could only show two hundred pounds you had made and laid by, father would let us marry, and I might keep this shop — it pays well, I can tell you — and keep my gentleman in a sly corner; you need never be seen in it."

"Ay, ay," said he, "that is the small game. But I am a man that have always preferred the big game. I shall set up my studio, and make enough to keep us both. So give me the stone, if you please. I shall take it round to them all, and the rogues won't get it out of *me* for a hundred and fifty; why, it is as big as a nut."

"No, no, Reginald. Money has always made mischief between you and me. You never had fifty pounds yet, you didn't fall into temptation. Do pray let me keep it for you; or else sell it — I know how to sell; nobody better — and keep the money for a good occasion."

"Is it yours, or mine?" said he, sulkily.

"Why yours, dear; you earned it."

"Then give it me, please." And he almost forced it out of her hand.

So now she sat down and cried over this piece of good luck, for her heart filled with forebodings.

He laughed at her, but at last had the grace to console her, and assure her she was tormenting herself for nothing.

"Time will show," said she, sadly.

Time did show.

Three or four days he came, as usual, to laugh her out of her forebodings. But presently his visits ceased. She knew what that meant: he was living like a gentleman, melting his diamond, and playing her false with the first pretty face he met.

This blow, coming after she had been so happy, struck Phœbe Dale stupid with grief. The line on her high forehead deepened; and at night she sat with her hands before her, sighing, and sighing, and listening for the footsteps that never came.

"Oh, Dick!" she said, "never you love any one. I am aweary of my life. And to think that, but for that diamond — oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Then Dick used to try and comfort her in his way, and often put his arm round her neck, and gave her his rough but honest sympathy. Dick's rare affection was her one drop of comfort; it was something to relieve her swelling heart.

"Oh, Dick!" she said to him one night, "I wish I had married him."

"What, to be ill-used?"

"He couldn't use me worse. I have been wife, and mother, and sweetheart, and all, to him; and to be left like this. He treats me like the dirt beneath his feet."

"'Tis your own fault, Phœbe, partly. You say the word, and I'll break every bone in his carcass."

"What, do him a mischief! Why, I'd rather die than harm a hair of his head. You must never lift a hand to him, or I shall hate you."

"Hate *me*, Phœbe?"

"Ay, boy: I should. God forgive me: 'tis no use deceiving ourselves; when a woman loves a man she despises, never you come between them; there's no reason in her love, so it is incurable. One comfort, it can't go on forever; it must kill me, before my time; and so best. If I was only a mother, and had a little Reginald to dandle on my knee and gloat upon, till he spent his money, and came back to me. That's why I said I wished I was his wife. Oh! why does God fill a poor woman's bosom with love, and nothing to spend it on but a stone; for sure his heart must be one. If I had only something that would let me always love it, a little toddling thing at my knee, that would always let me look at it, and love it, something too young to be false to me, too weak to run away from my long—ing — arms — and — year—ning heart!" Then came a burst of agony, and moans of desolation, till poor puzzled Dick blubbered loudly at her grief; and then her tears flowed in streams.

Trouble on trouble. Dick himself got strangely out of sorts, and complained of shivers. Phœbe sent him to bed early, and made him some white wine whey very hot. In the morning he got up, and said he was better; but after breakfast he was violently sick, and suffered several returns of nausea before noon. "One would think I was poisoned," said he.

At one o'clock he was seized with a kind of spasm in the throat that lasted so long it nearly choked him.

Then Phœbe got frightened, and sent to the nearest surgeon. He did not hurry, and poor Dick had another frightful spasm just as he came in.

"It is hysterical," said the surgeon. "No disease of the heart, is there? Give him a little sal-volatile every half hour."

In spite of the sal-volatile these terrible spasms seized him every half hour; and now he used to spring off the bed with a cry of terror when they came; and each one left him weaker and weaker; he had to be carried back by the women.

A sad, sickening fear seized on Phœbe. She left Dick with the maid, and tying on her bonnet in a moment, rushed wildly down the street, asking the neighbors for a great doctor, the best that could be had for money. One sent her east a mile, another west, and she was almost distracted, when who should drive up but Dr. and Mrs. Staines, to make purchases. She did not know his name, but she knew he was a doctor. She ran to the window, and cried, "Oh, doctor, my brother! Oh, pray come to him. Oh! oh!"

Dr. Staines got quickly, but calmly, out; told his wife to wait; and followed Phœbe up-stairs. She told him in a few agitated words how Dick had been taken, and all the symptoms; especially what had alarmed her so, his springing off the bed when the spasm came.

Dr. Staines told her to hold the patient up. He lost not a moment, but opened his mouth resolutely, and looked down.

"The glottis is swollen," said he: then he felt his hands, and said, with the grave, terrible calm of experience, "He is dying."

"Oh, no! no! Oh, doctor, save him! save him!"

"Nothing can save him, unless we had a surgeon on the spot. Yes, I might save him, if you have the courage: opening his windpipe before the next spasm is his one chance."

"Open his windpipe! Oh, doctor! It will kill him. Let me look at you."

She looked hard in his face. It gave her confidence.

"Is it the only chance?"

"The only one: and it is flying while we chatter."

"Do IT."

"He whipped out his lancet.

"But I can't look on it. I trust to you and my Saviour's mercy."

She fell on her knees, and bowed her head in prayer.

Staines seized a basin, put it by the bedside, made an incision in the windpipe, and got Dick down on his stomach, with his face over the bedside. Some blood ran, but not much. "Now!" he cried, cheerfully, "a small bellows! There's one in your parlor. Run."

Phœbe ran for it, and at Dr. Staines' direction lifted Dick a little, while the bellows, duly cleansed, were gently applied to the aperture in the windpipe, and the action of the lungs delicately aided by this primitive but effectual means.

He showed Phœbe how to do it, tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, wrote a hasty direction to an able surgeon near, and sent his wife off with it in the carriage.

Phœbe and he never left the patient till the surgeon came with all the instruments required; amongst the rest, with a big, tortuous pair of nippers, with which he could reach the glottis, and snip it. But they consulted, and thought it wiser to continue the surer method; and so a little tube was neatly inserted into Dick's windpipe, and his throat bandaged; and by this aperture he did his breathing for some little time.

Phœbe nursed him like a mother; and the terror and the joy did her good, and made her less desolate.

Dick was only just well when both of them were summoned to the farm, and arrived only just in time to receive their father's blessing and his last sigh.

Their elder brother, a married man, inherited the farm, and was executor. Phœbe and Dick were left fifteen hundred pounds apiece, on condition of their leaving England and going to Natal.

They knew directly what that meant. Phœbe was to be parted from a bad man, and Dick was to comfort her for the loss.

When this part of the will was read to Phœbe, she turned faint, and only her health and bodily vigor kept her from swooning right away.

But she yielded. "It is the will of the dead," said she, "and I will obey it; for, oh, if I had but listened to him more when he was alive to advise me, I should not sit here now, sick at heart and dry-eyed, when I ought to be thinking only of the good friend that is gone."

When she had come to this she became feverishly anxious to be gone. She busied herself in purchasing agricultural machines, and stores, and even stock; and to see her pinching the beasts' ribs to find their condition, and parrying all attempts to cheat her, you would never have believed she could be a love-sick woman.

Dick kept her up to the mark. He only left her to bargain with the master of a good vessel; for it was no trifle to take out horses and cows, and machines, and bales of cloth, cotton, and linen.

When that was settled they came in to town together, and Phœbe bought shrewdly, at wholesale houses in the city, for cash, and would have bargains: and the little shop in —— Street was turned into a warehouse.

They were all ardor, as colonists should be; and what pleased Dick most, she never mentioned Falcon; yet he learned from the maid that worthy had been there twice, looking very seedy.

The day drew near. Dick was in high spirits.

"We shall soon make our fortune out there," he said; "and I'll get you a good husband."

She shuddered, but said nothing.

The evening before they were to sail, Phœbe sat alone, in her black dress, tired with work, and asking herself,

sick at heart, could she ever really leave England, when the door opened softly, and Reginald Falcon, shabbily dressed, came in, and threw himself into a chair.

She started up with a scream, then sank down again, trembling, and turned her face to the wall.

"So you are going to run away from me!" said he savagely.

"Ay, Reginald," said she meekly.

"This is your fine love, is it?"

"You have worn it out, dear," she said softly, without turning her head from the wall.

"I wish I could say as much; but, curse it, every time I leave you I learn to love you more. I am never really happy but when I am with you."

"Bless you for saying that, dear. I often thought you *must* find that out one day; but you took too long."

"Oh, better late than never. Phœbe! Can you have the heart to go to the Cape, and leave me all alone in the world, with nobody that really cares for me? Surely you are not obliged to go."

"Yes; my father left Dick and me fifteen hundred pounds apiece to go: that was the condition. Poor Dick loves his unhappy sister. He won't go without me — I should be his ruin — poor Dick, that really loves me; and he lay a-dying here, and the good doctor and me — God bless him — we brought him back from the grave. Ah, you little know what I have gone through. You were not here. Catch you being near me when I am in trouble. There, I must go. I must go. I will go; if I fling myself into the sea half way."

"And, if you do, I'll take a dose of poison; for I have thrown away the truest heart, the sweetest, most unselfish, kindest, generous — oh! oh! oh!"

And he began to howl.

This set Phœbe sobbing. "Don't cry, dear," she mur-

mured through her tears; "if you have really any love for me, come with me."

"What, leave England, and go to a desert?"

"Love can make a desert a garden."

"Phœbe, I'll do anything else. I'll swear not to leave your side. I'll never look at any other face but yours. But I can't live in Africa."

"I know you can't. It takes a little real love to go there with a poor girl like me. Ah, well, I'd have made you so happy. We are not poor emigrants. I have a horse for you to ride, and guns to shoot; and me and Dick would do all the work for you. But there are others here you can't leave for me. Well, then, good-by, dear. In Africa, or here, I shall always love you; and many a salt tear I shall shed for you yet, many a one I have, as well you know. God bless you. Pray for poor Phœbe, that goes against her will to Africa, and leaves her heart with thee."

This was too much even for the selfish Reginald. He kneeled at her knees, and took her hand, and kissed it, and actually shed a tear or two over it.

She could not speak. He had no hope of changing her resolution; and presently he heard Dick's voice outside, so he got up to avoid him. "I'll come again in the morning, before you go."

"Oh, no! no!" she gasped. "Unless you want me to die at your feet. I am almost dead now."

Reginald slipped out by the kitchen.

Dick came in, and found his sister leaning with her head back against the wall. "Why, Phœbe," said he, "whatever is the matter?" and he took her by the shoulder.

She moaned, and he felt her all limp and powerless.

"What is it, lass? Whatever is the matter? Is it about going away?"

She would not speak for a long time.

When she did speak, it was to say something for which my male reader may not be prepared. But it will not surprise the women.

"O Dick — forgive me!"

"Why, what for?"

"Forgive me, or else kill me: I don't care which."

"I do, though. There, I forgive you. Now what's your crime?"

"I can't go. Forgive me!"

"Can't go?"

"I can't. Forgive me!"

"I'm blessed if I don't believe that vagabond has been here tormenting of you again."

"Oh, don't miscall him. He is penitent. Yes, Dick, he has been here crying to me — and I can't leave him. I can't — I can't. Dear Dick! you are young and stout-hearted; take all the things over, and make your fortune out there, and leave your poor foolish sister behind. I should only fling myself into the salt sea if I left him now, and that would be peace to me, but a grief to thee."

"Lordsake, Phœbe, don't talk so. I can't go without you. And do but think, why, the horses are on board by now, and all the gear. It's my belief a good hiding is all you want, to bring you to your senses; but I han't the heart to give you one, worse luck. Blessed if I know what to say or do."

"I won't go!" cried Phœbe, turning violent all of a sudden. "No, not if I am dragged to the ship by the hair of my head. Forgive me!" And with that word she was a mouse again.

"Eh, but women are kittle cattle to drive," said poor Dick ruefully. And down he sat at a nonplus, and very unhappy.

Phœbe sat opposite, sullen, heart-sick, wretched to the core; but determined not to leave Reginald.

Then came an event that might have been foreseen, yet it took them both by surprise.

A light step was heard, and a graceful, though seedy, figure entered the room with a set speech in his mouth: "Phœbe, you are right. I owe it to your long and faithful affection to make a sacrifice for you. I will go to Africa with you. I will go to the end of the world, sooner than you shall say I care for any woman on earth but you."

Both brother and sister were so unprepared for this, that they could hardly realize it at first.

Phœbe turned her great, inquiring eyes on the speaker, and it was a sight to see amazement, doubt, hope, and happiness animating her features, one after another.

"Is this real?" said she.

"I will sail with you to-morrow, Phœbe; and I will make you a good husband, if you will have me."

"That is spoke like a man," said Dick. "You take him at his word, Phœbe; and if he ill-uses you out there, I'll break every bone in his skin."

"How dare you threaten him?" said Phœbe. "You had best leave the room."

Out went poor Dick, with the tear in his eye at being snubbed so. While he was putting up the shutters, Phœbe was making love to her pseudo penitent. "My dear," said she, "trust yourself to me. You don't know all my love yet; for I have never been your wife, and I would not be your jade; that is the only thing I ever refused you. Trust yourself to me. Why, you never found happiness with others; try it with me. It shall be the best day's work you ever did, going out in the ship with me. You don't know how happy a loving wife can make her husband. I'll pet you out there as man

was never petted. And besides, it isn't for life; Dick and me will soon make a fortune out there, and then I'll bring you home, and see you spend it any way you like but one. Oh, how I love you! do you love me a little? I worship the ground you walk on. I adore every hair of your head!" Her noble arm went round his neck in a moment, and the grandeur of her passion electrified him so far that he kissed her affectionately, if not quite so warmly as she did him: and so it was all settled. The maid was discharged that night instead of the morning, and Reginald was to occupy her bed. Phœbe went up-stairs with her heart literally on fire, to prepare his sleeping-room, and so Dick and Reginald had a word.

"I say, Dick, how long will this voyage be?"

"Two months, sir, I am told."

"Please to cast your eyes on this suit of mine. Don't you think it is rather seedy—to go to Africa with? Why, I shall disgrace you on board the ship. I say, Dick, lend me three sovs., just to buy a new suit at the slop-shop."

"Well, brother-in-law," said Dick, "I don't see any harm in that. I'll go and fetch them for you."

What does this sensible Dick do but go up-stairs to Phœbe, and say, "He wants three pounds to buy a suit; am I to lend it him?"

Phœbe was shaking and patting her penitent's pillow. She dropped it on the bed in dismay. "Oh, Dick, not for all the world! Why, if he had three sovereigns, he'd desert me at the water's edge. Oh, God help me, how I love him! God forgive me, how I mistrust him! Good Dick! kind Dick! say we have suits of clothes, and we'll fit him like a prince, as he ought to be, on board ship; but not a shilling of money: and, my dear, don't put the weight on *me*. You understand?"

"Ay, mistress, I understand."

"Good Dick!"

"Oh, all right! and then don't you snap this here good, kind Dick's nose off at a word again."

"Never. I get wild if anybody threatens him. Then I'm not myself. Forgive my hasty tongue. You know I love you, dear!"

"Oh, ay! you love me well enough. But seems to me your love is precious like cold veal, and your love for that chap is hot roast beef."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, ye can laugh now, can ye?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, the more of that music, the better for me."

"Yes, dear; but go and tell him."

Dick went down, and said, "I've got no money to spare, till I get to the Cape; but Phœbe has got a box full of suits, and I made her promise to keep it out. She will dress you like a prince, you may be sure."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said Reginald dryly.

Dick made no reply.

At nine o'clock they were on board the vessel; at ten she weighed anchor, and a steam-vessel drew her down the river about thirty miles, then cast off, and left her to the south-easterly breeze. Up went sail after sail; she nodded her lofty head, and glided away for Africa.

Phœbe shed a few natural tears at leaving the shores of Old England; but they soon dried. She was demurely happy, watching her prize, and asking herself had she really secured it, and all in a few hours?

They had a prosperous voyage: were married at Cape Town, and went up the country, bag and baggage, looking out for a good bargain in land. Reginald was mounted on an English horse, and allowed to zigzag about, and shoot, and play, while his wife and brother-in-law marched slowly with their cavalcade.

What with air, exercise, wholesome food, and smiles of welcome, and delicious petting, this egotist enjoyed himself finely. He admitted as much. Says he, one evening to his wife, who sat by him for the pleasure of seeing him feed, "It sounds absurd; but I never was so happy in all my life."

At that, the celestial expression of her pastoral face, and the maternal gesture with which she drew her pet's head to her queenly bosom, was a picture for celibacy to gnash the teeth at.

CHAPTER IX.

During this period, the most remarkable things that happened to Dr. and Mrs. Staines were really those which I have related as connecting them with Phœbe Dale and her brother; to which I will now add that Dr. Staines detailed Dick's case in a remarkable paper, entitled "Œdema of the Glottis," and showed how the patient had been brought back from the grave by tracheotomy and artificial respiration. He received a high price for this article.

To tell the truth, he was careful not to admit that it was he who had opened the windpipe; so the credit of the whole operation was given to Mr. Jenkyn; and this gentleman was naturally pleased, and threw a good many consultation fees in Staines's way.

The Lucases, to his great comfort — for he had an instinctive aversion to Miss Lucas — left London for Paris in August, and did not return all the year.

In February he reviewed his year's work and twelve months' residence in the Bijou. The pecuniary result was, outgoings, nine hundred and fifty pounds; income, from fees, two hundred and eighty pounds; writing, ninety pounds.

He showed these figures to Mrs. Staines, and asked her if she could suggest any diminution of expenditure. Could she do with less housekeeping money?

"Oh, impossible! You cannot think how the servants eat; and they won't touch our home-made bread."

"The fools! Why?

"Oh, because they think it costs us less. Servants

seem to me always to hate the people whose bread they eat."

"More likely it is their vanity. Nothing that is not paid for before their eyes seems good enough for them. Well, dear, the bakers will revenge us. But is there any other item we could reduce? Dress?"

"Dress! Why, I spend nothing."

"Forty-five pounds this year."

"Well, I shall want none next year."

"Well, then, Rosa, as there is nothing we can reduce, I must write more, and take more fees, or we shall be in the wrong box. Only eight hundred and sixty pounds left of our little capital; and, mind, we have not another shilling in the world. One comfort, there is no debt. We pay ready money for everything."

Rosa colored a little, but said nothing.

Staines did his part nobly. He read; he wrote; he paced the yard. He wore his old clothes in the house; he took off his new ones when he came in. He was all genius, drudgery, patience.

How Phœbe Dale would have valued him, co-operated with him, and petted him, if she had had the good luck to be his wife!

The season came back, and with it Miss Lucas, towing a brilliant bride, Mrs. Vivian, young, rich, pretty, and gay, with a waist you could span, and athirst for pleasure.

This lady was the first that ever made Rosa downright jealous. She seemed to have everything the female heart could desire; and she was No. 1 with Miss Lucas this year. Now, Rosa was No. 1 last season, and had weakly imagined that was to last forever. But Miss Lucas had always a sort of female flame, and it never lasted two seasons.

Rosa did not care so very much for Miss Lucas before, except as a convenient friend; but now she was mortified

to tears at finding Miss Lucas made more fuss with another than with her.

This foolish feeling spurred her to attempt a rivalry with Mrs. Vivian, in the very things where rivalry was hopeless.

Miss Lucas gave both ladies tickets for a flower-show, where all the great folk were to be, princes and princesses, etc.

"But I have nothing to wear," sighed Rosa.

"Then you must get something, and mind it is not pink, please; for we must not clash in colors. You know I'm dark, and pink becomes me. (The selfish young brute was not half so dark as Rosa.) Mine is coming from Worth's, in Paris, on purpose. And this new Madame Cie, of Regent Street, has such a duck of a bonnet, just come from Paris. She wanted to make me one from it; but I told her I would have none but the pattern bonnet — and she knows very well she can't pass a copy off on me. Let me drive you up there, and you can see mine, and order one, if you like it."

"Oh, thank you! let me just run and speak to my husband first."

Staines was writing for the bare life, and a number of German books about him, slaving to make a few pounds — when in comes the buoyant figure and beaming face his soul delighted in.

He laid down his work, to enjoy the sunbeam of love.

"Oh, darling, I've only come in for a minute. We are going to a flower-show on the 13th; everybody will be so beautifully dressed — especially that Mrs. Vivian. I have got ten yards of beautiful blue silk in my wardrobe, but that is not enough to make a whole dress — everything takes so much stuff now. Madame Cie does not care to make up dresses unless she finds the silk, but Miss Lucas says she thinks, to oblige a friend of hers,

she would do it for once in a way. You know, dear, it would only take a few yards more, and it would last as a dinner-dress for ever so long."

Then she clasped him round the neck, and leaned her head upon his shoulder, and looked lovingly up in his face. "I know you would like your Rosa to look as well as Mrs. Vivian."

"No one ever looks as well, in my eyes, as my Rosa. There, the dress will add nothing to your beauty; but go and get it, to please yourself; it is very considerate of you to have chosen something of which you have ten yards, already. See, dear, I'm to receive twenty pounds for this article; if research was paid it ought to be a hundred. I shall add it all to your allowance for dresses this year. So no debt, mind; but come to me for everything."

The two ladies drove off to Madame Cie's, a pretty shop lined with dark velvet and lace draperies.

In the back room they were packing a lovely bridal dress, going off the following Saturday to New York.

"What, send from America to London?"

"Oh, dear, yes!" exclaimed Madame Cie. "The American ladies are excellent customers. They buy everything of the best, and the most expensive."

"I have brought a new customer," said Miss Lucas; "and I want you to do a great favor, and that is to match a blue silk, and make her a pretty dress for the flower-show on the 13th."

Madame Cie produced a white muslin polonaise, which she was just going to send home to the Princess ——, to be worn over mauve.

"Oh, how pretty and simple!" exclaimed Miss Lucas.

"I have some lace exactly like that," said Mrs. Staines.

"Then why don't you have a polonaise? The lace is the only expensive part, the muslin is a mere nothing;

and it is such a useful dress, it can be worn over any silk."

It was agreed Madame Cie was to send for the blue silk and the lace, and the dresses were to be tried on on Thursday.

On Thursday, as Rosa went gayly into Madame Cie's back room to have the dresses tried on, Madame Cie said, "You have a beautiful lace shawl, but it wants arranging; in five minutes I could astonish you with what I could do to that shawl."

"Oh, pray do," said Mrs. Staines.

The dressmaker kept her word. By the time the blue dress was tried on, Madame Cie had, with the aid of a few pins, plaits, and a bow of blue ribbon, transformed the half lace shawl into one of the smartest and *distingué* things imaginable; but when the bill came in at Christmas, for that five minutes' labor and *distingué* touch, she charged one pound eight.

Madame Cie then told the ladies, in an artfully confidential tone, she had a quantity of black silk coming home, which she had purchased considerably below cost price; and that she should like to make them each a dress — not for her own sake, but theirs — as she knew they would never meet such a bargain again. "You know, Miss Lucas," she continued, "we don't want our money, when we know our customers. Christmas is soon enough for us."

"Christmas is a long time off," thought the young wife, "nearly ten months. I think I'll have a black silk, Madame Cie; but I must not say anything to the doctor about it just yet, or he might think me extravagant."

"No one can ever think a lady extravagant for buying a black silk; it's such a useful dress; lasts forever — almost."

Days, weeks, and months rolled on, and with them an

ever-rolling tide of flower-shows, dinners, at-homes, balls, operas, lawn-parties, concerts, and theatres.

Strange that in one house there should be two people who loved each other, yet their lives ran so far apart, except while they were asleep: the man all industry, self-denial, patience; the woman all frivolity, self-indulgence, and amusement; both chained to an oar, only — one in a working boat, the other in a painted galley.

The woman got tired first, and her charming color waned sadly. She came to him for medicine to set her up. "I feel so languid."

"No, no," said he; "no medicine can do the work of wholesome food and rational repose. You lack the season of all natures, sleep. Dine at home three days running, and go to bed at ten."

On this the doctor's wife went to a chemist for advice. He gave her a pink stimulant; and, as stimulants have two effects, viz., first to stimulate, and then to weaken, this did her no lasting good. Dr. Staines cursed the London season, and threatened to migrate to Liverpool.

But there was worse behind.

Returning one day to his dressing-room, just after Rosa had come down-stairs, he caught sight of a red stain in a wash-hand-basin. He examined it; it was arterial blood.

He went to her directly, and expressed his anxiety.

"Oh, it is nothing," said she.

"Nothing! Pray, how often has it occurred?"

"Once or twice. I must take your advice, and be quiet, that is all."

Staines examined the housemaid; she lied instinctively at first, seeing he was alarmed; but, being urged to tell the truth, said she had seen it repeatedly, and had told the cook.

He went down-stairs again, and sat down, looking wretched.

"Oh, dear!" said Rosa. "What is the matter now?"

"Rosa," said he, very gravely, "there are two people a woman is mad to deceive — her husband and her physician. You have deceived both."

CHAPTER X.

I SUSPECT Dr. Staines merely meant to say that she had concealed from him an alarming symptom for several weeks; but she answered in a hurry, to excuse herself, and let the cat out of the bag — excuse my vulgarity.

"It was all that Mrs. Vivian's fault. She laughed at me so for not wearing them; and she has a waist you can span — the wretch!"

"Oh, then, you have been wearing stays clandestinely?"

"Why, you know I have. Oh, what a stupid! I have let it all out."

"How could you do it, when you knew, by experience, it is your death?"

"But it looks so beautiful, a tiny waist."

"It looks as hideous as a Chinese foot, and, to the eye of science, far more disgusting; it is the cause of so many unlovely diseases."

"Just tell me one thing; have you looked at Mrs. Vivian?"

"Minutely. I look at all your friends with great anxiety, knowing no animal more dangerous than a fool. Vivian — a skinny woman, with a pretty face, lovely hair, good teeth, dying eyes" —

"Yes, lovely!"

"A sure proof of a disordered stomach — and a waist pinched in so unnaturally, that I said to myself, 'Where on earth does this idiot put her liver?' Did you ever read of the frog who burst, trying to swell to an ox? Well, here is the rivalry reversed; Mrs. Vivian is a bag

of bones in a balloon; she can machine herself into a wasp; but a fine young woman like you, with flesh and muscle, must kill yourself three or four times before you can make your body as meagre, hideous, angular, and unnatural as Vivian's. But all you ladies are monomaniacs; one might as well talk sense to a gorilla. It brought you to the edge of the grave. I saved you. Yet you could go and — God grant me patience. So I suppose these unprincipled women lent you their stays to deceive your husband?"

"No. But they laughed at me so that — Oh, Christie, I'm a wretch; I kept a pair at the Lucases, and a pair at Madame Cie's, and I put them on now and then."

"But you never appeared here in them?"

"What, before my tyrant? Oh no, I dared not."

"So you took them off before you came home?"

Rosa hung her head, and said "Yes" in a reluctant whisper.

"You spent your daylight dressing. You dressed to go out; dressed again in stays; dressed again without them; and all to deceive your husband, and kill yourself, at the bidding of two shallow, heartless women, who would dance over your grave without a pang of remorse, or sentiment of any kind, since they live, like midges, *only to dance in the sun, and suck some worker's blood.*"

"Oh, Christie! I'm so easily led. I am too great a fool to live. Kill me!"

And she kneeled down, and renewed the request, looking up in his face with an expression that might have disarmed Cain *ipsum.*

He smiled superior. "The question is, are you sorry you have been so thoughtless?"

"Yes, dear. Oh! oh!"

"Will you be very good to make up?"

"Oh, yes. Only tell me how; for it does not come natural to poor me."

"Keep out of those women's way for the rest of the season."

"I will."

"Bring your stays home, and allow me to do what I like with them."

"Of course. Cut them in a million pieces."

"Till you are recovered, you must be my patient, and go nowhere without me."

"That is no punishment, I am sure."

"Punishment! Am I the man to punish you? I only want to save you."

"Well, darling, it won't be the first time."

"No; but I do hope it will be the last."

CHAPTER XI.

"*Sublatâ causâ tollitur effectus.*" The stays being gone, and dissipation moderated, Mrs. Staines bloomed again, and they gave one or two unpretending little dinners at the Bijou. Dr. Staines admitted no false friends to these. They never went beyond eight; five gentlemen, three ladies. By this arrangement the terrible discursiveness of the fair, and man's cruel disposition to work a subject threadbare, were controlled and modified, and a happy balance of conversation established. Lady Cicely Treherne was always invited, and always managed to come; for she said, "They were the most agweeable little paaties in London, and the host and hostess both so intewesting." In the autumn, Staines worked double tides with the pen, and found a vehicle for medical narratives in a weekly magazine that did not profess medicine.

This new vein put him in heart. His fees, towards the end of the year, were less than last year, because there was no hundred-guinea fee; but there was a marked increase in the small fees, and the unflagging pen had actually earned him two hundred pounds, or nearly. So he was in good spirits.

Not so Mrs. Staines; for some time she had been uneasy, fretful, and like a person with a weight on her mind.

One Sunday she said to him, "Oh, dear, I do feel so dull. Nobody to go to church with, nor yet to the Zoo."

"I'll go with you," said Staines.

"You will! To which?"

"To both; in for a penny, in for a pound."

So to church they went; and Staines, whose motto was "*Hoc age*," minded his book. Rosa had intervals of attention to the words, but found plenty of time to study the costumes.

During the Litany in bustled Clara, the housemaid, with a white jacket on so like her mistress's, that Rosa clutched her own convulsively, to see whether she had not been skinned of it by some devilish sleight-of-hand.

No, it was on her back; but Clara's was identical.

In her excitement, Rosa pinched Staines, and with her nose, that went like a water-wagtail, pointed out the malefactor. Then she whispered, "Look! How dare she? My very jacket! Earrings too, and brooches, and dresses her hair like mine."

"Well, never mind," whispered Staines. "Sunday is her day. We have got all the week to shine. There, don't look at her — 'From all evil speaking, lying, and slandering'" —

"I can't keep my eyes off her."

"Attend to the Litany. Do you know, this is really a beautiful composition?"

"I'd rather do the work fifty times over myself."

"Hush! people will hear you."

When they walked home after church, Staines tried to divert her from the consideration of her wrongs; but no — all other topics were too flat by comparison.

She mourned the hard fate of mistresses — unfortunate creatures that could not do without servants.

"Is not that a confession that servants are good, useful creatures, with all their faults? Then as to the mania for dress, why, that is not confined to them. It is the mania of the sex. Are you free from it?"

"No, of course not. But I am a lady, if you please."

"Then she is your intellectual inferior, and more excusable. Anyway, it is wise to connive at a thing we can't help."

"What keep her, after this? no, never."

"My dear, pray do not send her away, for she is tidy in the house, and quick, and better than any one we have had this last six months; and you know you have tried a great number."

"To hear you speak, one would think it was my fault that we have so many bad servants."

"I never said it was your fault; but I *think*, dearest, a little more forbearance in trifles" —

"Trifles! trifles — for a mistress and maid to be seen dressed alike in the same church? You take the servants' part against me, that you do."

"You should not say that, even in jest. Come now, do you really think a jacket like yours can make the servant look like you, or detract from your grace and beauty? There is a very simple way; put your jacket by for a future occasion, and wear something else in its stead at church."

"A nice thing, indeed, to give in to these creatures. I won't do it."

"Why won't you, this once?"

"Because I won't — there!"

"That is unanswerable," said he.

Mrs. Staines said that; but when it came to acting, she deferred to her husband's wish; she resigned her intention of sending for Clara and giving her warning. On the contrary, when Clara let her in, and the white jackets rubbed together in the narrow passage, she actually said nothing, but stalked to her own room, and tore her jacket off, and flung it on the floor.

Unfortunately, she was so long dressing for the Zoo, that Clara came in to arrange the room. She picks up

the white jacket, takes it in both hands, gives it a flap, and proceeds to hang it up in the wardrobe.

Then the great feminine heart burst its bounds.

"You can leave that alone. I shall not wear that again."

Thereupon ensued an uneven encounter, Clara being one of those of whom the Scripture says, "The poison of asps is under their tongues."

"La, ma'am," said she, "why, 'tain't so very dirty."

"No; but it is too common."

"Oh, because I've got one like it. Ay. Missises can't abide a good-looking servant, nor to see 'em dressed becoming."

"Mistresses do not like servants to forget their place, nor wear what does not become their situation."

"My situation! Why, I can pay my way, go where I will. I don't tremble at the tradesmen's knock, as some do."

"Leave the room! Leave it this moment."

"Leave the room, yes — and I'll leave the house too, and tell all the neighbors what I know about it."

She flounced out and slammed the door; and Rosa sat down, trembling.

Clara rushed to the kitchen, and there told the cook and Andrew Pearman how she had given it to the mistress, and every word she had said to her, with a good many more she had not.

The cook laughed and encouraged her.

But Andrew Pearman was wroth, and said, "You to affront our mistress like that! Why, if I had heard you, I'd have twisted your neck for ye."

"It would take a better man than you to do that. You mind your own business. Stick to your one-horse chay."

"Well, I'm not above my place, for that matter. But you gals must always be aping your betters."

"I have got a proper pride, that is all, and you haven't. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to do two men's work; drive a brougham and wait on a horse, and then come in and wait at table, You are a tea-kettle groom, that is what you are. Why, my brother was coachman to Lord Fitz-James, and gave his lordship notice the first time he had to drive the children. Says he, 'I don't object to the children, my lord, but with her ladyship in the carriage.' It's such servants as you as spoil places. No servant as knows what's due to a servant ought to know you. They'd scorn your 'quaintance, as I do, Mr. Pearman."

"You are a stuck-up hussy, and a soldier's jade," roared Andrew.

"And you are a low tea-kettle groom."

This expression wounded the great equestrian soul to the quick; the rest of Sunday he pondered on it; the next morning he drove the doctor, as usual, but with a heavy heart.

Meantime, the cook made haste and told the baker Pearman had "got it hot" from the housemaid, and she had called him a tea-kettle groom; and in less than half an hour after that it was in every stable in the mews. Why, as Pearman was taking the horse out of the brougham, didn't two little red-headed urchins call out, "Here, come and see the tea-kettle groom!" and at night some mischievous boy chalked on the black door of the stable a large white tea-kettle, and next morning a drunken, idle fellow, with a clay pipe in his mouth, and a dirty pair of corduroy trousers, no coat, but a shirt very open at the chest, showing inflamed skin, the effect of drink, inspected that work of art with blinking eyes and vacillating toes, and said, "This comes of a chap doing too much. A few more like you, and work would be scarce. A fine thing for gentlefolks to make one man

fill two places! but it ain't the gentlefolks' fault, it's the man as humors 'em."

Pearman was a peaceable man, and made no reply, but went on with his work; only during the day he told his master that he should be obliged to him if he would fill his situation as soon as convenient.

The master inquired the cause, and the man told him, and said the mews was too hot for him.

The doctor offered him five pounds a year more, knowing he had a treasure; but Pearman said, with sadness and firmness, that he had made up his mind to go, and go he would.

The doctor's heart fairly sank at the prospect of losing the one creature he could depend upon.

Next Sunday evening Clara was out, and fell in with friends, to whom she exaggerated her grievance.

Then they worked her up to fury, after the manner of servants' *friends*. She came home, packed her box, brought it down, and then flounced into the room to Doctor and Mrs. Staines, and said, "I shan't sleep another night in this house."

Rosa was about to speak, but Dr. Staines forbade her: he said, "You had better think twice of that. You are a good servant, though for once you have been betrayed into speaking disrespectfully. Why forfeit your character, and three weeks' wages?"

"I don't care for my wages. I won't stay in such a house as this."

"Come, you must not be impertinent."

"I don't mean to, sir," said she, lowering her voice suddenly; then, raising it as suddenly, "There are my keys, ma'am, and you can search my box."

"Mrs. Staines will not search your box; and you will retire at once to your own part of the house."

"I'll go farther than that," said she, and soon after the street door was slammed; the Bijou shook.

At six o'clock next morning, she came for her box. It had been put away for safety. Pearman told her she must wait till the doctor came down. She did not wait, but went at eleven A.M. to a police-magistrate, and took out a summons against Dr. Staines, for detaining a box containing certain articles specified — value under fifteen pounds.

When Dr. Staines heard she had been for her box, but left no address, he sent Pearman to hunt for her. He could not find her. She avoided the house, but sent a woman for her diurnal love letters. Dr. Staines sent the woman back to fetch her. She came, received her box, her letters, and the balance of her wages, which was small, for Staines deducted the three weeks' wages.

Two days afterwards, to his surprise, the summons was served.

Out of respect for a court of justice, however humble, Dr. Staines attended next Monday to meet the summons.

The magistrate was an elderly man, with a face shaped like a hog's, but much richer in color, being purple and pimply; so foul a visage Staines had rarely seen, even in the lowest class of the community.

Clara swore that her box had been opened, and certain things stolen out of it; and that she had been refused the box next morning.

Staines swore that he had never opened the box, and that, if any one else had, it was with her consent, for she had left the keys for that purpose. He bade the magistrate observe that if a servant went away like this, and left no address, she put it out of the master's *power* to send her box after her; and he proved he had some trouble to force the box on her.

The pig-faced beak showed a manifest leaning towards the servant, but there wasn't a leg to stand on; and he

did not believe, nor was it credible, that anything had been stolen out of her box.

At this moment, Pearman, sent by Rosa, entered the court with an old gown of Clara's that had been discovered in the scullery, and a scribbling-book of the doctor's, which Clara had appropriated, and written amorous verses in, very superior — in number — to those that have come down to us from Anacreon.

"Hand me those," said the pig-faced beak.

"What are they, Dr. Staines?"

"I really don't know. I must ask my servant."

"Why, more things of mine that have been detained," said Clara.

"Some things that have been found since she left," said Staines.

"Oh! those that hide know where to find."

"Young woman," said Staines, "do not insult those whose bread you have eaten, and who have given you many presents besides your wages. Since you are so ready to accuse people of stealing, permit me to say that this book is mine, and not yours; and yet, you see, it is sent after you because you have written your trash in it."

The purple, pig-faced beak went instantly out of the record, and wasted a deal of time reading Clara's poetry, and trying to be witty. He raised the question whose book this was. The girl swore that it was given her by a lady who was now in Rome. Staines swore he bought it of a certain stationer, and happening to have his pass-book in his pocket, produced an entry corresponding with the date of the book.

The pig-faced beak said that the doctor's was an improbable story, and that the gown and the book were quite enough to justify the summons. Verdict, one guinea costs.

"What, because two things she never demanded have

been found and sent after her? This is monstrous. I shall appeal to your superiors."

"If you are impertinent I'll fine you five pounds."

"Very well, sir. Now hear me: if this is an honest judgment, I pray God I may be dead before the year's out; and, if it isn't, I pray God you may be."

Then the pig-faced beak fired up, and threatened to fine him for blaspheming.

He deigned no reply, but paid the guinea, and Clara swept out of the court, with a train a yard long, and leaning on the arm of a scarlet soldier who avenged Dr. Staines with military promptitude.

Christopher went home raging internally, for hitherto he had never seen so gross a case of injustice.

One of his humble patients followed him, and said, "I wish I had known, sir; you shouldn't have come here to be insulted. Why, no gentleman can ever get justice against a servant girl when *he* is sitting. It is notorious, and that makes these hussies so bold. I've seen that jade here with the same story twice afore."

Staines reached home more discomposed than he could have himself believed. The reason was that barefaced injustice in a court of justice shook his whole faith in man. He opened the street door with his latch-key, and found two men standing in the passage. He inquired what they wanted.

"Well, sir," said one of them, civilly enough, "we only want our due."

"For what?"

"For goods delivered at this house, sir. Balance of account." And he handed him a butcher's bill, £88, 11*s.* 5½*d.*

"You must be mistaken; we run no bills here. We pay ready money for everything."

"Well, sir," said the butcher, "there have been pay-

ments; but the balance has always been gaining; and we have been put off so often, we determined to see the master. Show you the books, sir, and welcome."

"This instant, if you please." He took the butcher's address, who then retired, and the other tradesman, a grocer, told him a similar tale; balance, sixty pounds odd.

He went to the butcher's, sick at heart, inspected the books, and saw that, right or wrong, they were incontrovertible; that debt had been gaining slowly, but surely, almost from the time he confided the accounts to his wife. She had kept faith with him about five weeks, no more.

The grocer's books told a similar tale.

The debtor put his hand to his heart, and stood a moment. The very grocer pitied him, and said, "There's no hurry, doctor; a trifle on account, if settlement in full not convenient just now. I see you have been kept in the dark."

"No, no," said Christopher; "I'll pay every shilling." He gave one gulp, and hurried away.

At the fishmonger's, the same story, only for a smaller amount.

A bill of nineteen pounds at the very pastrycook's; a place she had promised him, as her physician, never to enter.

At the draper's, thirty-seven pounds odd.

In short, wherever she had dealt, the same system: partial payments, and ever-growing debt.

Remembering Madame Cie, he drove in a cab to Regent Street, and asked for Mrs. Staines's account.

"Shall I send it, sir?"

"No; I will take it with me."

"Miss Edwards, make out Mrs. Staines's account, if you please."

Miss Edwards was a good while making it out; but it was ready at last. He thrust it into his pocket, without daring to look at it there; but he went into Verrey's, and asked for a cup of coffee, and perused the document.

The principal items were as follows: —

		£	s.
May 4.	Re-shaping and repairing elegant lace mantle,	1	8
	Chip bonnet, feather, and flowers	4	4
May 20.	Making and trimming blue silk dress — material part found	19	19
	Five yards rich blue silk to match	4	2
June 1.	Polonaise and jacket trimmed with lace — material part found	17	17
June 8.	One black silk dress, handsomely trimmed with jet guipure and lace	49	18

A few shreds and fragments of finery, bought at odd times, swelled the bill to £99 11*s.* 6*d.* — not to terrify the female mind with three figures.

And let no unsophisticated young lady imagine that the trimmings, which constituted three-fourths of this bill, were worth anything. The word "lace," in Madame Cie's bill, invariably meant machine-made trash, worth tenpence a yard, but charged eighteen shillings a yard for one pennyworth of work in putting it on. Where real lace was used, Madame Cie always *let her customers know it.* Miss Lucas's bill for this year contained the two following little items: —

	£	s.
Rich gros de cecile polonaise and jacket to match, trimmed with Chantilly lace and valenciennes . . .	68	5
Superb robe de chambre, richly trimmed with skunk fur,	40	0

The customer found the stuff; viz., two shawls. Carolina found the nasty little pole-cats, and got twenty-four shillings for them; Madame Cie found *the rest.*

But Christopher Staines had not Miss Lucas's bill to

compare his wife's with. He could only compare the latter with their income, and with male notions of common sense and reason.

He went home, and into his studio, and sat down on his hard beech chair; he looked round on his books and his work, and then, for the first time, remembered how long and how patiently he had toiled for every hundred pounds he had made; and he laid the evidences of his wife's profusion and deceit by the side of those signs of painful industry and self-denial, and his soul filled with bitterness. "Deceit! deceit!"

Mrs. Staines heard he was in the house, and came to know about the trial. She came hurriedly in, and caught him with his head on the table, in an attitude of prostration, quite new to him; he raised his head directly he heard her, and revealed a face, pale, stern, and wretched.

"Oh! what is the matter now?" said she.

"The matter is what it has always been, if I could only have seen it. You have deceived me, and disgraced yourself. Look at those bills."

"What bills? Oh!"

"You have had an allowance for housekeeping."

"It wasn't enough."

"It was plenty, if you had kept faith with me, and paid ready money. It was enough for the first five weeks. I am housekeeper now, and I shall allow myself two pounds a week less, and not owe a shilling either."

"Well, all I know is, I couldn't do it: no woman could."

"Then, you should have come to me, and said so; and I would have shown you how. Was I in Egypt, or at the North Pole, that you could not find me, to treat me like a friend? You have ruined us: these debts will sweep away the last shilling of our little capital; but it isn't that, oh, no! it is the miserable deceit."

Rosa's eye caught the sum total of Madame Cie's bill, and she turned pale. "Oh, what a cheat that woman is!"

But she turned paler when Christopher said, "That is the one honest bill; for I gave you leave. It is these that part us: these! these! Look at them, false heart! There, go and pack up your things. We can live here no longer; we are ruined. I must send you back to your father."

"I thought you would, sooner or later," said Mrs. Staines, panting, trembling, but showing a little fight. "He told you I wasn't fit to be a poor man's wife."

"An honest man's wife, you mean: that is what you are not fit for. You will go home to your father, and I shall go into some humble lodging to work for you. I'll contrive to keep you, and find you a hundred a year to spend in dress — the only thing your heart can really love. But I won't have an enemy here in the disguise of a friend; and I won't have a wife about me I must treat like a servant, and watch like a traitor."

The words were harsh, but the agony with which they were spoken distinguished them from vulgar vituperation.

They overpowered poor Rosa; she had been ailing a little some time, and from remorse and terror, coupled with other causes, nature gave way. Her lips turned white, she gasped inarticulately, and, with a little piteous moan, tottered, and swooned dead away.

He was walking wildly about, ready to tear his hair, when she tottered; he saw her just in time to save her, and laid her gently on the floor, and kneeled over her.

Away went anger and every other feeling but love and pity for the poor, weak creature that, with all her faults, was so lovable and so loved.

He applied no remedies at first: he knew they were useless and unnecessary. He laid her head quite low, and opened door and window, and loosened all her dress, sighing deeply all the time at her condition.

While he was thus employed, suddenly a strange cry broke from him: a cry of horror, remorse, joy, tenderness, all combined: a cry compared with which language is inarticulate. His swift and practical eye had made a discovery.

He kneeled over her, with his eyes dilating and his hands clasped, a picture of love and tender remorse.

She stirred.

Then he made haste, and applied his remedies, and brought her slowly back to life; he lifted her up, and carried her in his arms quite away from the bills and things, that, when she came to, she might see nothing to revive her distress. He carried her to the drawing-room, and kneeled down and rocked her in his arms, and pressed her again and again gently to his heart, and cried over her. "O my dove, my dove! the tender creature God gave me to love and cherish, and have I used it harshly? If I had only known! if I had only known!"

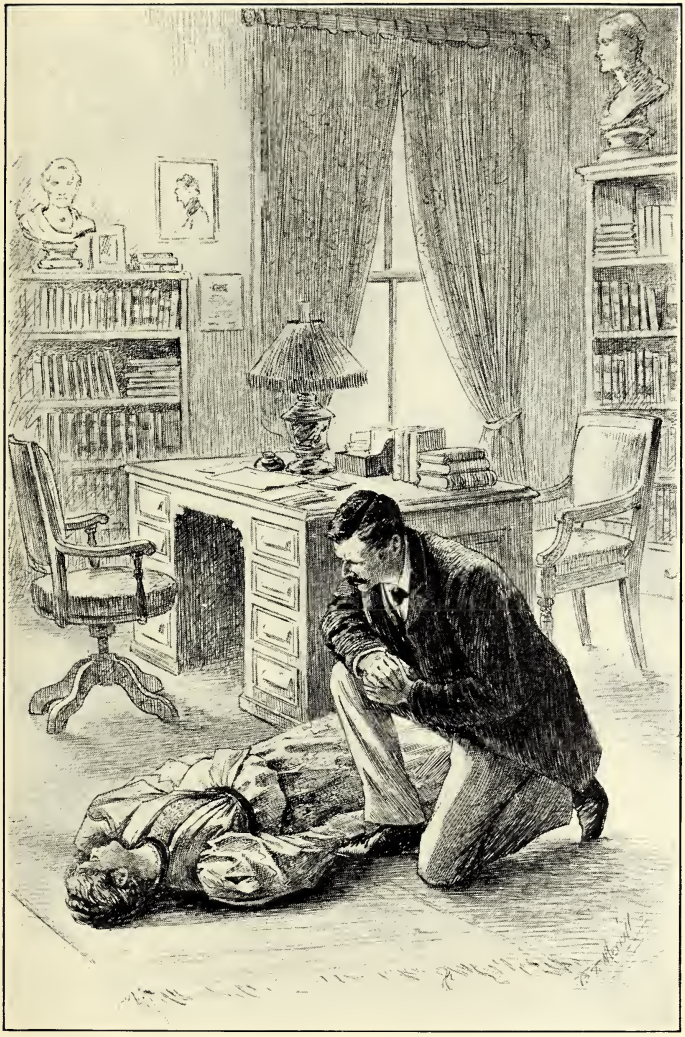
While he was thus bemoaning her, and blaming himself, and crying over her like the rain, — he, whom she had never seen shed a tear before in all his troubles, — she was coming to entirely, and her quick ears caught his words, and she opened her lovely eyes on him.

"I forgive you, dear," she said feebly. "BUT I HOPE YOU WILL BE A KINDER FATHER THAN A HUSBAND."

These quiet words, spoken with rare gravity and softness, went through the great heart like a knife.

He gave a sort of shiver, but said not a word.

But that night he made a solemn vow to God that no harsh word from his lips should ever again strike a being so weak, so loving, and so beyond his comprehension. Why look for courage and candor in a creature so timid and shy, she could not even tell her husband *that* until, with her subtle sense, she saw he had discovered it?



LAID HER GENTLY ON THE FLOOR, AND KNEELED OVER HER.

CHAPTER XII.

To be a father; to have an image of his darling Rosa, and a fruit of their love to live and work for: this gave the sore heart a heavenly glow, and elasticity to bear. Should this dear object be born to an inheritance of debt, of poverty? Never.

He began to act as if he was even now a father. He entreated Rosa not to trouble or vex herself; he would look into their finances, and set all straight.

He paid all the bills, and put by a quarter's rent and taxes. Then there remained of his little capital just ten pounds.

He went to his printers, and had a thousand order-checks printed. These forms ran thus: —

"Dr. Staines, of 13 Dear Street, Mayfair (blank for date), orders of (blank here for tradesman and goods ordered), for cash. Received same time (blank for tradesman's receipt). Notice: Dr. Staines disowns all orders not printed on this form, and paid for at date of order."

He exhibited these forms, and warned all the tradespeople, before a witness whom he took round for that purpose.

He paid off Pearman on the spot. Pearman had met Clara, dressed like a pauper, her soldier having emptied her box to the very dregs, and he now offered to stay. But it was too late.

Staines told the cook Mrs. Staines was in delicate health, and must not be troubled with anything. She must come to him for all orders.

"Yes, sir," said she. But she no sooner comprehended the check system fully than she gave warning. It put a stop to her wholesale pilfering. Rosa's cooks had made fully a hundred pounds out of her amongst them since she began to keep accounts.

Under the male housekeeper every article was weighed on delivery, and this soon revealed that the butcher and the fishmonger had habitually delivered short weight from the first, besides putting down the same thing twice. The things were sent back that moment, with a printed form, stating the nature and extent of the fraud.

The washerwoman, who had been pilfering wholesale so long as Mrs. Staines and her sloppy-headed maids counted the linen, and then forgot it, was brought up with a run, by triplicate forms, and by Staines counting the things before two witnesses, and compelling the washerwoman to count them as well, and verify or dispute on the spot. The laundress gave warning — a plain confession that stealing had been part of her trade.

He kept the house well for three pounds a week, exclusive of coals, candles, and wine. His wife had had five pounds, and whatever she asked for dinner-parties, yet found it not half enough upon her method.

He kept no coachman. If he visited a patient, a man in the yard drove him at a shilling per hour.

By these means, and by working like a galley slave, he dragged his expenditure down almost to a level with his income.

Rosa was quite content at first, and thought herself lucky to escape reproaches on such easy terms.

But by and by so rigorous a system began to gall her. One day she fancied a Bath bun; sent the new maid to the pastry-cook's. Pastry-cook asked to see the doctor's order. Maid could not show it, and came back bunless.

Rosa came into the study to complain to her husband.

"A Bath bun," said Staines. "Why, they are colored with annotto, to save an egg, and annotto is adulterated with chromates that are poison. Adulteration upon adulteration. *I*'ll make you a real Bath bun." Off coat, and into the kitchen, and made her three, pure, but rather heavy. He brought them her in due course. She declined them languidly. She was off the notion, as they say in Scotland.

"If I can't have a thing when I want it, I don't care for it at all." Such was the principle she laid down for his future guidance.

He sighed, and went back to his work; she cleared the plate.

One day, when she asked for the carriage, he told her the time was now come for her to leave off carriage exercise. She must walk with him every day, instead.

"But I don't like walking."

"I am sorry for that. But it is necessary to you, and by and by your life may depend on it."

Quietly, but inexorably, he dragged her out walking every day.

In one of these walks she stopped at a shop window, and fell in love with some baby's things. "Oh! I must have that," said she. "I must. I shall die if I don't; you'll see now."

"You shall," said he, "when I can pay for it," and drew her away.

The tears of disappointment stood in her eyes, and his heart yearned over her. But he kept his head.

He changed the dinner hour to six, and used to go out directly afterwards.

She began to complain of his leaving her alone like that.

"Well, but wait a bit," said he; "suppose I am making a little money by it, to buy you something you have set your heart on, poor darling!"

In a very few days after this, he brought her a little box with a slit in it. He shook it, and money rattled; then he unlocked it, and poured out a little pile of silver. "There," said he, "put on your bonnet, and come and buy those things."

She put on her bonnet, and on the way she asked how it came to be all in silver.

"That is a puzzler," said he, "isn't it?"

"And how did you make it, dear? by writing?"

"No."

"By fees from the poor people?"

"What, undersell my brethren! Hang it, no! My dear, I made it honestly, and some day I will tell you how I made it; at present, all I will tell you is this: I saw my darling longing for something she had a right to long for; I saw the tears in her sweet eyes, and — oh, come along, do. I am wretched till I see you with the things in your hand."

They went to the shop; and Staines sat and watched Rosa buying baby-clothes. Oh, it was a pretty sight to see this modest young creature, little more than a child herself, anticipating maternity, but blushing every now and then, and looking askant at her lord and master. How his very bowels yearned over her!

And when they got home, she spread the things on a table, and they sat hand in hand, and looked at them, and she leaned her head on his shoulder, and went quietly to sleep there.

And yet, as time rolled on, she became irritable at times, and impatient, and wanted all manner of things she could not have, and made him unhappy.

Then he was out from six o'clock till one, and she took it into her head to be jealous. So many hours to spend away from her! Now that she wanted all his comfort.

Presently, Ellen, the new maid, got gossiping in the yard, and a groom told her her master had a sweetheart on the sly, he thought; for he drove the brougham out every evening himself; "and," said the man, "he wears a mustache at night."

Ellen ran in, brimful of this, and told the cook; the cook told the washerwoman; the washerwoman told a dozen families, till about two hundred people knew it.

At last it came to Mrs. Staines in a roundabout way, at the very moment when she was complaining to Lady Cicely Treherne of her hard lot. She had been telling her she was nothing more than a lay-figure in the house.

"My husband is housekeeper now, and cook, and all, and makes me delicious dishes, I can tell you; *such* curries! I couldn't keep the house with five pounds a week, so now he does it with three: and I never get the carriage, because walking is best for me; and he takes it out every night to make money. I don't understand it."

Lady Cicely suggested that perhaps Dr. Staines thought it best for her to be relieved of all worry, and so undertook the housekeeping.

"No. no, no," said Rosa; "I used to pay them all a part of their bills, and then a little more, and so I kept getting deeper; and I was ashamed to tell Christie, so that he calls deceit; and oh, he spoke to me so cruelly once! But he was very sorry afterwards, poor dear! Why are girls brought up so silly? all piano, and no sense; and why are men sillier still to go and marry such silly things? A wife! I am not so much as a servant. Oh, I am finely humiliated, and," with a sudden hearty naïveté all her own, "it serves me just right."

While Lady Cicely was puzzling this out, in came a letter. Rosa opened it, read it, and gave a cry like a wounded deer.

"Oh!" she cried, "I am a miserable woman. What will become of me?"

The letter informed her bluntly that her husband drove his brougham out every night to pursue a criminal amour.

While Rosa was wringing her hands in real anguish of heart, Lady Cicely read the letter carefully.

"I don't believe this," said she quietly.

"Not true! Why, who would be so wicked as to stab a poor, inoffensive wretch like me, if it wasn't true?"

"The first ugly woman would, in a minute. Don't you see the witer can't tell you where he goes? Dwives his bwougham out! That is all your infaumant knows."

"Oh, my dear friend, bless you! What have I been complaining to you about? All is light, except to lose his love. What shall I do? I will never tell him. I will never affront him by saying I suspected him."

"Wosa, if you do that, you will always have a serpent gnawing you. No; you must put the letter quietly into his hand, and say, 'Is there any truth in that?'"

"Oh, I could not. I haven't the courage. If I do that, I shall know by his face if there is any truth in it."

"Well, and you must know the twuth. You shall know it. I want to know it too; for if he does not love you twuly, I will nevaa twust myself to anything so deceitful as a man."

Rosa at last consented to follow this advice.

After dinner she put the letter into Christopher's hand, and asked him quietly was there any truth in that: then her hands trembled, and her eyes drank him.

Christopher read it, and frowned; then he looked up, and said, "No, not a word. What scoundrels there are in the world! To go and tell you that, *now!* Why, you little goose! have you been silly enough to believe it?"

"No," said she irresolutely. "But *do* you drive the brougham out every night?"

"Except Sunday."

"Where?"

"My dear wife, I never loved you as I love you now; and if it was not for you, I should not drive the brougham out of nights. That is all I shall tell you at present; but some day I'll tell you all about it."

He took such a calm high hand with her about it, that she submitted to leave it there; but from this moment the serpent doubt nibbled her.

It had one curious effect, though. She left off complaining of trifles.

Now it happened one night that Lady Cicely Treherne and a friend were at a concert in Hanover Square. The other lady felt rather faint, and Lady Cicely offered to take her home. The carriages had not yet arrived, and Miss Macnamara said to walk a few steps would do her good: a smart cabman saw them from a distance and drove up, and touching his hat said, "Cab, ladies?"

It seemed a very superior cab, and Miss Macnamara said "Yes" directly.

The cabman bustled down and opened the door; Miss Macnamara got in first, then Lady Cicely; her eye fell on the cabman's face, which was lighted full by a street-lamp, and it was Christopher Staines!

He started and winced; but the woman of the world never moved a muscle.

"Where to?" said Staines, averting his head.

She told him where, and when they got out, said, "I'll send it you by the servant."

A flunkey soon after appeared with half-a-crown, and the amateur coachman drove away. He said to himself, "Come, my mustache is a better disguise than I thought."

Next day, and the day after, he asked Rosa, with affected carelessness, had she heard anything of Lady Cicely.

"No, dear; but I dare say she will call this afternoon: it is her day."

She did call at last, and after a few words with Rosa, became a little restless, and asked if she might consult Dr. Staines.

"Certainly, dear. Come to his studio."

"No; might I see him here?"

"Certainly." She rang the bell, and told the servant to ask Dr. Staines if he would be kind enough to step into the drawing-room.

Dr. Staines came in, and bowed to Lady Cicely, and eyed her a little uncomfortably.

She began, however, in a way that put him quite at his ease. "You remember the advice you gave us about my little cousin Tadcastah."

"Perfectly: his life is very precarious; he is bilious, consumptive, and, if not watched, will be epileptical; and he has a fond, weak mother, who will let him kill himself."

"Exactly: and you wecommended a sea voyage, with a medical attendant to watch his diet, and contwol his habits. Well, she took other advice, and the youth is worse; so now she is fwightened, and a month ago she asked me to pwopose to you to sail about with Tadcastah; and she offered me a thousand pounds a year. I put on my stiff look, and said, 'Countess, with every desiah to oblige you, I must decline to cawwy that offah to a man of genius, learning, and weputation, who has the ball at his feet in London.'"

"Lord forgive you, Lady Cicely."

"Lord bless her for standing up for my Christie."

Lady Cicely continued: "Now, this good lady, you

must know, is not exactly one of us: the late earl mawwied into cotton, or wool, or something. So she said, 'Name your price for him.' I shwugged my shoulders, smiled affably, and as affectedly as you like, and changed the subject. But since then things have happened. I am afwaid it is my duty to make you the judge whether you choose to sail about with that little cub — Rosa, I can beat about the bush no longer. Is it a fit thing that a man of genius, at whose feet we ought all to be sitting with reverence, should drive a cab in the public streets? Yes, Rosa Staines, your husband drives his brougham out at night, not to visit any other lady, as that anonymous wretch told you, but to make a few misewable shillings for you."

"Oh, Christie!"

"It is no use, Dr. Staines; I must and will tell her. My dear, he drove *me* three nights ago. He had a cabman's badge on his poor arm. If you knew what I suffered in those five minutes! Indeed it seems cruel to speak of it — but I could not keep it from Rosa, and the reason I muster courage to say it before you, sir, it is because I know she has other friends who keep you out of their consultations; and, after all, it is the world that ought to blush, and not you."

Her ladyship's kindly bosom heaved, and she wanted to cry; so she took her handkerchief out of her pocket without the least hurry, and pressed it delicately to her eyes, and did cry quietly, but without any disguise, like a brave lady, who neither cried nor did anything else she was ashamed to be seen at.

As for Rosa, she sat sobbing round Christopher's neck, and kissed him with all her soul.

"Dear me!" said Christopher. "You are both very kind. But, begging your pardon, it is much ado about nothing."

Lady Cicely took no notice of that observation. "So, Rosa dear," said she, "I think you are the person to decide whether he had not better sail about with that little cub, than — oh!"

"I will settle that," said Staines. "I have one beloved creature to provide for. I may have another. I *must* make money. Turning a brougham into a cab, whatever you may think, is an honest way of making it, and I am not the first doctor who has coined his brougham at night. But if there is a good deal of money to be made by sailing with Lord Tadcaster, of course I should prefer that to cab-driving, for I have never made above twelve shillings a night."

"Oh, as to that, she shall give you fifteen hundred a year."

"Then I jump at it."

"What! and leave *me?*"

"Yes, love: leave you — for your good; and only for a time. Lady Cicely, it is a noble offer. My darling Rosa will have every comfort — ay, every luxury, till I come home, and then we will start afresh with a good balance, and with more experience than we did at first."

Lady Cicely gazed on him with wonder. She said, "Oh! what stout hearts men have! No, no; don't let him go. See; he is acting. His great heart is torn with agony. I will have no hand in parting man and wife — no, not for a day." And she hurried away in rare agitation.

Rosa fell on her knees, and asked Christopher's pardon for having been jealous; and that day she was a flood of divine tenderness. She repaid him richly for driving the cab. But she was unnaturally cool about Lady Cicely; and the exquisite reason soon came out. "Oh yes! She is very good; very kind; but it is not for me now! No! you shall not sail about with her cub of a cousin, and leave me at such a time."

Christopher groaned.

"Christie, you shall not see that lady again. She came here to part us. *She is in love with you.* I was blind not to see it before."

Next day, as Lady Cicely sat alone in the morning-room thinking over this very scene, a footman brought in a card and a note. "Dr. Staines begs particularly to see Lady Cicely Treherne."

The lady's pale cheek colored; she stood irresolute a single moment. "I will see Dr. Staines," said she.

Dr. Staines came in, looking pale and worn; he had not slept a wink since she saw him last.

She looked at him full, and divined this at a glance. She motioned him to a seat, and sat down herself, with her white hand pressing her forehead, and her head turned a little away from him.

CHAPTER XIII.

He told her he had come to thank her for her great kindness, and to accept the offer.

She sighed. "I hoped it was to decline it. Think of the misery of separation, both to you and her."

"It will be misery. But we are not happy as it is, and she cannot bear poverty. Nor is it fair she should, when I can give her every comfort by just playing the man for a year or two." He then told Lady Cicely there were more reasons than he chose to mention: go he must, and would; and he implored her not to let the affair drop. In short, he was sad but resolved, and she found she must go on with it, or break faith with him. She took her desk, and wrote a letter concluding the bargain for him. She stipulated for half the year's fee in advance. She read Dr. Staines the letter.

"You *are* a friend!" said he. "I should never have ventured on that; it will be a godsend to my poor Rosa. You will be kind to her when I am gone?"

"I will."

"So will Uncle Philip, I think. I will see him before I go, and shake hands. He has been a good friend to me; but he was too hard upon *her;* and I could not stand that."

Then he thanked and blessed her again, with the tears in his eyes, and left her more disturbed and tearful than she had ever been since she grew to woman. "O cruel poverty!" she thought, "that such a man should be torn from his home, and thank me for doing it — all for a little money — and here are we poor commonplace creatures rolling in it."

Staines hurried home, and told his wife. She clung to him convulsively, and wept bitterly; but she made no direct attempt to shake his resolution; she saw, by his iron look, that she could only afflict, not turn him.

Next day came Lady Cicely to see her. Lady Cicely was very uneasy in her mind, and wanted to know whether Rosa was reconciled to the separation.

Rosa received her with a forced politeness and an icy coldness that petrified her. She could not stay long in face of such a reception. At parting, she said, sadly, "You look on me as an enemy."

"What else can you expect, when you part my husband and me?" said Rosa, with quiet sternness.

"I meant well," said Lady Cicely sorrowfully; "but I wish I had never interfered."

"So do I," and she began to cry.

Lady Cicely made no answer. She went quietly away, hanging her head sadly.

Rosa was unjust, but she was not rude nor vulgar; and Lady Cicely's temper was so well governed that it never blinded her heart. She withdrew, but without the least idea of quarrelling with her afflicted friend, or abandoning her. She went quietly home, and wrote to Lady ——, to say that she should be glad to receive Dr. Staines's advance as soon as convenient, since Mrs. Staines would have to make fresh arrangements, and the money might be useful.

The money was forthcoming directly. Lady Cicely brought it to Dear Street, and handed it to Dr. Staines. His eyes sparkled at the sight of it.

"Give my love to Rosa," said she softly, and cut her visit very short.

Staines took the money to Rosa, and said, "See what our best friend has brought us. You shall have four hundred, and I hope, after the bitter lessons you have

had, you will be able to do with that for some months. The two hundred I shall keep as a reserve fund for you to draw on."

"No, no!" said Rosa. "I shall go and live with my father, and never spend a penny. O Christie, if you knew how I hate myself for the folly that is parting us! Oh, why don't they teach girls sense and money, instead of music and the globes?"

But Christopher opened a banking account for her, and gave her a check-book, and entreated her to pay everything by check, and run no bills whatever; and she promised. He also advertised the Bijou, and put a bill in the window: "The lease of this house, and the furniture, to be sold."

Rosa cried bitterly at sight of it, thinking how high in hope they were, when they had their first dinner there, and also when she went to her first sale to buy the furniture cheap.

And now everything moved with terrible rapidity. The Amphitrite was to sail from Plymouth in five days; and, meantime, there was so much to be done, that the days seemed to gallop away.

Dr. Staines forgot nothing. He made his will in duplicate, leaving all to his wife; he left one copy at Doctors' Commons and another with his lawyer; inventoried all his furniture and effects in duplicate, too; wrote to Uncle Philip, and then called on him to seek a reconciliation. Unfortunately, Dr. Philip was in Scotland. At last this sad pair went down to Plymouth together, there to meet Lord Tadcaster and go on board H.M.S. Amphitrite, lying out at anchor, under orders for the Australian Station.

They met at the inn, as appointed; and sent word of their arrival on board the frigate, asking to remain on shore till the last minute.

Dr. Staines presented his patient to Rosa; and after a little while drew him apart and questioned him professionally. He then asked for a private room. Here he and Rosa really took leave; for what could the poor things say to each other on a crowded quay? He begged her forgiveness, on his knees, for having once spoken harshly to her, and she told him, with passionate sobs, he had never spoken harshly to her; her folly it was had parted them.

Poor wretches! they clung together with a thousand vows of love and constancy. They were to pray for each other at the same hours: to think of some kind word or loving act, at other stated hours; and so they tried to fight with their suffering minds against the cruel separation; and if either should die, the other was to live wedded to memory, and never listen to love from other lips; but no! God was pitiful; He would let them meet again ere long, to part no more. They rocked in each other's arms; they cried over each other—it was pitiful.

At last the cruel summons came; they shuddered, as if it was their death-blow. Christopher, with a face of agony, was yet himself, and would have parted then: and so best. But Rosa could not. She would see the last of him, and became almost wild and violent when he opposed it.

Then he let her come with him to Milbay Steps; but into the boat he would not let her step.

The ship's boat lay at the steps, manned by six sailors, all seated, with their oars tossed in two vertical rows. A smart middy in charge conducted them, and Dr. Staines and Lord Tadcaster got in, leaving Rosa, in charge of her maid, on the quay.

"Shove off"—"Down"—"Give way."

Each order was executed so swiftly and surely that, in as many seconds, the boat was clear, the oars struck the

water with a loud splash, and the husband was shot away like an arrow, and the wife's despairing cry rang on the stony quay, as many a poor woman's cry had rung before.

In half a minute the boat shot under the stern of the frigate.

They were received on the quarter-deck by Captain Hamilton: he introduced them to the officers — a torture to poor Staines, to have his mind taken for a single instant from his wife — the first lieutenant came aft, and reported, "Ready for making sail, sir."

Staines seized the excuse, rushed to the other side of the vessel, leaned over the taffrail, as if he would fly ashore, and stretched out his hands to his beloved Rosa; and she stretched out her hands to him. They were so near, he could read the expression of her face. It was wild and troubled, as one who did not yet realize the terrible situation, but would not be long first.

"HANDS MAKE SAIL — AWAY, ALOFT — UP ANCHOR" — rang in Christopher's ear, as if in a dream. All his soul and senses were bent on that desolate young creature. How young and amazed her lovely face! Yet this bewildered child was about to become a mother. Even a stranger's heart might have yearned with pity for her: how much more her miserable husband's!

The capstan was manned, and worked to a merry tune that struck chill to the bereaved; yards were braced for casting, anchor hove, catted, and fished, sail was spread with amazing swiftness, the ship's head dipped, and slowly and gracefully paid off towards the breakwater, and she stood out to sea under swiftly-swelling canvas and a light north-westerly breeze.

Staines only felt the motion: his body was in the ship, his soul with his Rosa. He gazed, he strained his eyes to see her eyes, as the ship glided from England

and her. While he was thus gazing and trembling all over, up came to him a smart second lieutenant, with a brilliant voice that struck him like a sword. "Captain's orders to show you berths; please choose for Lord Tadcaster and yourself."

The man's wild answer made the young officer stare. "Oh, sir! not now — try and do my duty when I have quite lost her — my poor wife — a child — a mother — there — sir — on the steps — there! — there!"

Now this officer always went to sea singing "Oh be joyful." But a strong man's agony, who can make light of it? It was a revelation to him; but he took it quickly. The first thing he did, being a man of action, was to dash into his cabin, and come back with a short, powerful double glass. "There!" said he roughly, but kindly, and shoved it into Staines's hand. He took it, stared at it stupidly, then used it, without a word of thanks, so wrapped was he in his anguish.

This glass prolonged the misery of that bitter hour. When Rosa could no longer tell her husband from another, she felt he was really gone, and she threw her hands aloft, and clasped them above her head, with the wild abandon of a woman who could never again be a child; and Staines saw it, and a sharp sigh burst from him, and he saw her maid and others gather round her. He saw the poor young thing led away, with her head all down, as he had never seen her before, and supported to the inn; and then he saw her no more.

His heart seemed to go out of his bosom in search of her, and leave nothing but a stone behind: he hung over the taffrail like a dead thing. A steady foot-fall slapped his ear. He raised his white face and filmy eyes, and saw Lieutenant Fitzroy marching to and fro like a sentinel, keeping everybody away from the mourner, with the steady, resolute, business-like face of a man in whom

sentiment is confined to action; its phrases and its flourishes being literally *terra incognita* to the honest fellow.

Staines staggered towards him, holding out both hands, and gasped out, "God bless you. Hide me somewhere — must not be seen *so* — got duty to do — Patient — can't do it yet — one hour to draw my breath — oh, my God, my God! — one hour, sir. Then do my duty, if I die — as you would."

Fitzroy tore him down into his own cabin, shut him in and ran to the first lieutenant, with a tear in his eye. "Can I have a sentry, sir?"

"Sentry! What for?"

"The doctor — awfully cut up at leaving his wife: got him in my cabin. Wants to have his cry to himself."

"Fancy a fellow crying at going to sea!"

"It is not that, sir; it is leaving his wife."

"Well, is he the only man on board that has got a wife?"

"Why, no, sir. It *is* odd, now I think of it. Perhaps he has only got that *one*."

"Curious creatures, landsmen," said the first lieutenant. "However, you can stick a marine there."

"Yes, sir."

"And I say, show the *youngster* the berths, and let him choose, as the doctor's aground."

"Yes, sir."

So Fitzoy planted his marine, and then went after Lord Tadcaster: he had drawn up alongside his cousin, Captain Hamilton. The captain, being an admirer of Lady Cicely, was mighty civil to his little lordship, and talked to him more than was his wont on the quarter-deck; for though he had a good flow of conversation, and dispensed with ceremony in his cabin, he was apt to be rather short on deck. However, he told little

Tadcaster he was fortunate; they had a good start, and, if the wind held, might hope to be clear of the Channel in twenty-four hours. "You will see Eddystone light-house about four bells," said he.

"Shall we go out of sight of land altogether?" inquired his lordship.

"Of course we shall, and the sooner the better." He then explained to the novice that the only danger to a good ship was from the land.

While Tadcaster was digesting this paradox, Captain Hamilton proceeded to descant on the beauties of blue water and its fine medicinal qualities, which, he said, were particularly suited to young gentlemen with bilious stomachs, but presently, catching sight of Lieutenant Fitzroy standing apart, but with the manner of a lieutenant not there by accident, he stopped, and said, civilly but smartly, "Well, sir?"

Fitzroy came forward directly, saluted, and said he had orders from the first lieutenant to show Lord Tadcaster the berths. His lordship must be good enough to choose, because the doctor — couldn't.

"Why not?"

"Brought to, sir — for the present — by — well, by grief."

"Brought to by grief! Who the deuce is grief? No riddles on the quarter-deck, if you please, sir."

"Oh no, sir. I assure you he is awfully cut up; and he is having his cry out in my cabin."

"Having his cry out! why, what for?"

"Leaving his wife, sir."

"Oh, is that all?"

"Well, I don't wonder," cried little Tadcaster warmly. "She is, oh, so beautiful!" and a sudden blush o'erspread his pasty cheeks. "Why on earth didn't we bring her along with us here?" said he, suddenly opening his eyes with astonishment at the childish omission.

"Why, indeed?" said the captain comically, and dived below, attended by the well-disciplined laughter of Lieutenant Fitzroy, who was too good an officer not to be amused at his captain's jokes. Having acquitted himself of that duty — and it is a very difficult one sometimes — he took Lord Tadcaster to the main-deck, and showed him two comfortable sleeping-berths that had been screened off for him and Dr. Staines; one of these was fitted with a standing bed-place, the other had a cot swung in it. Fitzroy offered him the choice, but hinted that he himself preferred a cot.

"No, thank you," says my lord mighty dryly.

"All right," said Fitzroy cheerfully. "Take the other, then, my lord."

His little lordship cocked his eye like a jackdaw, and looked almost as cunning. "You see," said he, "I have been reading up for this voyage."

"Oh, indeed! Logarithms?"

"Of course not."

"What then?"

"Why, 'Peter Simple' — to be sure."

"Ah, ha!" said Fitzroy, with a chuckle that showed plainly he had some delicious reminiscences of youthful study in the same quarter.

The little lord chuckled too, and put one finger on Fitzroy's shoulder, and pointed at the cot with another. "Tumble out the other side, you know — slippery hitches — cords cut — down you come flop in the middle of the night."

Fitzroy's eye flashed merriment: but only for a moment. His countenance fell the next. "Lord bless you," said he sorrowfully, "all that game is over now. Her Majesty's ship! — it is a church afloat. The service is going to the devil, as the old fogies say."

"Ain't you sorry?" says the little lord, cocking his eye again like the bird hereinbefore mentioned.

"Of course I am."

"Then I'll take the standing bed."

"All right. I say, you don't mind the doctor coming down with a run, eh?"

"He is not ill: I am. He is paid to take care of me: I am not paid to take care of him," said the young lord sententiously.

"I understand," replied Fitzroy, dryly. "Well, every one for himself, and Providence for us all — as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens."

Here my lord was summoned to dine with the captain. Staines was not there; but he had not forgotten his duty; in the midst of his grief he had written a note to the captain, hoping that a bereaved husband might not seem to desert his post if he hid for a few hours the sorrow he felt himself unable to control. Meantime he would be grateful if Captain Hamilton would give orders that Lord Tadcaster should eat no pastry, and drink only six ounces of claret, otherwise he should feel that he was indeed betraying his trust.

The captain was pleased and touched with this letter. It recalled to him how his mother sobbed when she launched her little middy, swelling with his first cocked hat and dirk.

There was champagne at dinner, and little Tadcaster began to pour out a tumbler. "Hold on!" said Captain Hamilton; "you are not to drink that;" and he quietly removed the tumbler. "Bring him six ounces of claret."

While they were weighing the claret with scientific precision, Tadcaster remonstrated; and, being told it was the doctor's order, he squeaked out, "Confound him! why did not he stay with his wife? She is beautiful." Nor did he give it up without a struggle. "Here's hospitality!" said he. "Six ounces!"

Receiving no reply, he inquired of the third lieuten-

ant, which was generally considered the greatest authority in a ship — the captain, or the doctor.

The third lieutenant answered not, but turned his head away, and, by violent exertion, succeeded in not splitting.

"I'll answer that," said Hamilton politely. "The captain is the highest in his department, and the doctor in his: now Doctor Staines is strictly within his department, and will be supported by me and my officers. You are bilious, and epileptical, and all the rest of it, and you are to be cured by diet and blue water."

Tadcaster was inclined to snivel: however, he subdued that weakness with a visible effort, and, in due course, returned to the charge. "How would you look," quavered he, "if there was to be a mutiny in this ship of yours, and I was to head it?'

"Well, I should look *sharp* — hang all the ringleaders at the yardarm, clap the rest under hatches, and steer for the nearest prison."

"Oh!" said Tadcaster, and digested this scheme a bit. At last he perked up again, and made his final hit. "Well, I shouldn't care, for one, if you didn't flog us."

"In that case," said Captain Hamilton, "I'd flog yon — and stop your six ounces."

"Then curse the sea; that is all I say."

"Why, you have not seen it; you have only seen the British Channel." It was Mr. Fitzroy who contributed this last observation.

After dinner all but the captain went on deck, and saw the Eddystone lighthouse ahead and to leeward. They passed it. Fitzroy told his lordship its story, and that of its unfortunate predecessors. Soon after this Lord Tadcaster turned in.

Presently the captain observed a change in the thermometer, which brought him on deck. He scanned the water and the sky, and as these experienced commanders

have a subtle insight into the weather, especially in familiar latitudes, he remarked to the first lieutenant that it looked rather unsettled; and, as a matter of prudence, ordered a reef in the topsails, and the royal yards to be sent down: ship to be steered W. by S. This done, he turned in, but told them to call him if there was any change in the weather.

During the night the wind gradually headed; and at four bells in the middle watch a heavy squall came up from the south-west.

This brought the captain on deck again: he found the officer of the watch at his post, and at work. Sail was shortened, and the ship made snug for heavy weather.

At four A.M. it was blowing hard, and, being too near the French coast, they wore the ship.

Now, this operation was bad for little Tadcaster. While the vessel was on the starboard tack, the side kept him snug; but, when they wore her, of course he had no leeboard to keep him in. The ship gave a lee-lurch, and shot him clean out of his bunk into the middle of the cabin.

He shrieked and shrieked, with terror and pain, till the captain and Staines, who were his nearest neighbors, came to him, and they gave him a little brandy, and got him to bed again. Here he suffered nothing but violent sea-sickness for some hours.

As for Staines, he had been swinging heavily in his cot; but such was his mental distress that he would have welcomed sea-sickness, or any reasonable bodily suffering. He was in that state when the sting of a wasp is a touch of comfort.

Worn out with sickness, Tadcaster would not move. Invited to breakfast, he swore faintly, and insisted on dying in peace. At last exhaustion gave him a sort of sleep, in spite of the motion, which was violent, for it

was now blowing great guns, a heavy sea on, and the great waves dirty in color and crested with raging foam.

They had to wear ship again, always a ticklish manœuvre in weather like this.

A tremendous sea struck her quarter, stove in the very port abreast of which the little lord was lying, and washed him clean out of bed into the lee scuppers, and set all swimming around him.

Didn't he yell, and wash about the cabin, and grab at all the chairs and tables and things that drifted about, nimble as eels, avoiding his grasp!

In rushed the captain, and in staggered Staines. They stopped his "voyage autour de sa chambre," and dragged him into the after saloon.

He clung to them by turns, and begged, with many tears, to be put on the nearest land; a rock would do.

"Much obliged," said the captain; "now is the very time to give rocks a wide berth."

"A dead whale, then — a lighthouse — anything but a beast of a ship."

They pacified him with a little brandy, and for the next twenty-four hours he scarcely opened his mouth, except for a purpose it is needless to dwell on. We can trust to our terrestrial readers' personal reminiscences of lee-lurches, weather-rolls, and their faithful concomitant.

At last they wriggled out of the Channel, and soon after that the wind abated, and next day veered round to the northward, and the ship sailed almost on an even keel. The motion became as heavenly as it had been diabolical, and the passengers came on deck.

Staines had suffered one whole day from sea-sickness, but never complained. I believe it did his mind more good than harm.

As for Tadcaster, he continued to suffer, at intervals, for two days more, but on the fifth day out he appeared

with a little pink tinge on his cheek and a wolfish appetite. Dr. Staines controlled his diet severely, as to quality, and, when they had been at sea just eleven days, the physician's heavy heart was not a little lightened by the marvellous change in him. The unthinking, who believe in the drug system, should have seen what a physician can do with air and food, when circumstances enable him to *enforce* the diet he enjoins. Money will sometimes buy even health, if you *avoid drugs entirely*, and go another road.

Little Tadcaster went on board, pasty, dim-eyed, and very subject to fits, because his stomach was constantly overloaded with indigestible trash, and the blood in his brain-vessels was always either galloping or creeping, under the first or second effect of stimulants administered, at first, by thoughtless physicians. Behold him now — bronzed, pinky, bright-eyed, elastic; and only one fit in twelve days.

The quarter-deck was hailed from the "look-out" with a cry that is sometimes terrible, but in this latitude and weather welcome and exciting. "Land, ho!"

"Where away?" cried the officer of the watch.

"A point on the lee-bow, sir."

It was the island of Madeira: they dropped anchor in Funchal Roads, furled sails, squared yards, and fired a salute of twenty-one guns for the Portuguese flag.

They went ashore, and found a good hotel, and were no longer dosed, as in former days, with oil, onions, garlic, eggs. But the wine queer, and no *madeira* to be got.

Staines wrote home to his wife: he told her how deeply he had felt the bereavement; but did not dwell on that; his object being to cheer her. He told her it promised to be a rapid and wonderful cure, and one that might very well give him a fresh start in London. They need not be parted a whole year, he thought. He sent

her a very long letter, and also such extracts from his sea journal as he thought might please her. After dinner they inspected the town, and what struck them most was to find the streets paved with flag-stones, and most of the carts drawn by bullocks on sledges. A man every now and then would run forward and drop a greasy cloth in front of the sledge, to lubricate the way.

Next day, after breakfast, they ordered horses; these on inspection, proved to be of excellent breed, either from Australia or America — very rough shod, for the stony roads. Started for the Grand Canal — peeped down that mighty chasm, which has the appearance of an immense mass having been blown out of the centre of the mountain.

They lunched under the great dragon tree near its brink, then rode back admiring the bold mountain scenery. Next morning at dawn, rode on horses up the hill to the convent. Admired the beautiful gardens on the way. Remained a short time; then came down in hand-sleighs — little baskets slung on sledges, guided by two natives; these sledges run down the hill with surprising rapidity, and the men guide them round corners by sticking out a foot to port or starboard.

Embarked at 11.30 A.M.

At 1.30, the men having dined, the ship was got under way for the Cape of Good Hope, and all sail made for a southerly course, to get into the north-east trades.

The weather was now balmy and delightful, and so genial that everybody lived on deck, and could hardly be got to turn in to their cabins, even for sleep.

Dr. Staines became a favorite with the officers. There is a great deal of science on board a modern ship of war, and, of course, on some points Staines, a Cambridge wrangler, and a man of many sciences and books, was an oracle. On others he was quite behind, but a ready

and quick pupil. He made up to the navigating officer, and learned, with his help, to take observations. In return he was always at any youngster's service in a trigonometrical problem; and he amused the midshipmen and young lieutenants with analytical tests; some of these were applicable to certain liquids dispensed by the paymaster. Under one of them the port wine assumed some very droll colors and appearances not proper to grape-juice.

One lovely night that the ship clove the dark sea into a blaze of phosphorescence, and her wake streamed like a comet's tail, a waggish middy got a bucketful hoisted on deck, and asked the doctor to analyze that. He did not much like it, but yielded to the general request; and by dividing it into smaller vessels, and dropping in various chemicals, made rainbows and silvery flames and what not. But he declined to repeat the experiment: "No, no; once is philosophy; twice is cruelty. I've slain more than Samson already."

As for Tadcaster, science had no charms for him; but fiction had; and he got it galore; for he cruised about the forecastle, and there the quartermasters and old seamen spun him yarns that held him breathless.

But one day my lord had a fit on the quarter-deck, and a bad one; and Staines found him smelling strong of rum. He represented this to Captain Hamilton. The captain caused strict inquiries to be made, and it came out that my lord had gone among the men, with money in both pockets, and bought a little of one man's grog, and a little of another, and had been sipping the furtive but transient joys of solitary intoxication.

Captain Hamilton talked to him seriously; told him it was suicide.

"Never mind, old boy," said the young monkey; "a short life and a merry one."

Then Hamilton represented that it was very ungentlemanlike to go and tempt poor Jack with his money, to offend discipline, and get flogged. "How will you feel, Tadcaster, when you see their backs bleeding under the cat?"

"Oh, d——n it all, George, don't do that," says the young gentleman, all in a hurry.

Then the commander saw he had touched the right chord. So he played on it, till he got Lord Tadcaster to pledge his honor not to do it again.

The little fellow gave the pledge, but relieved his mind as follows: "But it is a cursed tyrannical hole, this tiresome old ship. You can't do what you like in it."

"Well, but no more you can in the grave: and that is the agreeable residence you were hurrying to but for this tiresome old ship."

"Lord! no more you can," said Tadcaster, with sudden candor. "*I forgot that.*"

The airs were very light; the ship hardly moved. It was beginning to get dull, when one day a sail was sighted on the weather-bow, standing to the eastward: on nearing her, she was seen, by the cut of her sails, to be a man-of-war, evidently homeward bound: so Captain Hamilton ordered the main-royal to be lowered (to render signal more visible) and the "demand" hoisted. No notice being taken of this, a gun was fired to draw her attention to the signal. This had the desired effect; down went her main-royal, up went her "number." On referring to the signal book, she proved to be the Vindictive from the Pacific Station.

This being ascertained, Captain Hamilton, being that captain's senior, signalled "Close and prepare to receive letters." In obedience to this she bore up, ran down, and rounded to; the sail in the Amphitrite was also short-

ened, the maintopsail laid to the mast, and a boat lowered. The captain having finished his despatches, they, with the letter-bags, were handed into the boat, which shoved off, pulled to the lee side of the Vindictive, and left the despatches, with Captain Hamilton's compliments. On its return, both ships made sail on their respective course, exchanging "bon voyage" by signal, and soon the upper sails of the homeward-bounder were seen dipping below the horizon: longing eyes followed her on board the Amphitrite.

How many hurried missives had been written and despatched in that half-hour. But as for Staines, he was a man of forethought, and had a volume ready for his dear wife.

Lord Tadcaster wrote to Lady Cicely Treherne. His epistle, though brief, contained a plum or two.

He wrote: "What with sailing, and fishing, and eating nothing but roast meat, I'm quite another man."

This amused her ladyship a little, but not so much as the postscript, which was indeed the neatest thing in its way she had met with, and she had some experience, too.

"P.S. — I say, Cicely, I think I should like to marry you. Would you mind?"

Let us defy time and space to give you Lady Cicely's reply: "I should enjoy it of all things, Taddy. But, alas! I am too young."

N.B. — She was twenty-seven, and Tad sixteen. To be sure, Tad was four feet eleven, and she was only five feet six and a half.

To return to my narrative (with apologies), this meeting of the vessels caused a very agreeable excitement that day; but a greater was in store. In the afternoon, Tadcaster, Staines, and the principal officers of the ship, being at dinner in the captain's cabin, in came the officer of the watch, and reported a large spar on the weather-bow.

"Well, close it, if you can; and let me know if it looks worth picking up."

He then explained to Lord Tadcaster that, on a cruise, he never liked to pass a spar, or anything that might possibly reveal the fate of some vessel or other.

In the middle of his discourse the officer came in again, but not in the same cool business way: he ran in excitedly, and said, "Captain, the signalman reports it *alive!*"

"Alive?—a spar! What do you mean? Something alive *on* it, eh?"

"No, sir; alive itself."

"How can that be? Hail him again. Ask him what it is."

The officer went out, and hailed the signalman at the mast-head. "What is it?"

"Sea-sarpint, I think."

This hail reached the captain's ears faintly. However, he waited quietly till the officer came in and reported it; then he burst out, "Absurd! there is no such creature in the universe. What do you say, Dr. Staines?—It is in your department."

"The universe in my department, captain?"

"Haw! haw! haw!" went Fitzroy and two more.

"No, you rogue, the serpent."

Dr. Staines, thus appealed to, asked the captain if he had ever seen small snakes out at sea.

"Why, of course. Sailed through a mile of them once, in the archipelago."

"Sure they were snakes?"

"Quite sure; and the biggest was not eight feet long."

"Very well, captain; then sea-serpents exist, and it becomes a mere question of size. Now which produces the larger animals in every kind,—land or sea? The grown elephant weighs, I believe, about five tons. The

very smallest of the whale tribe weighs ten; and they go as high as forty tons. There are smaller fish than the whale, that are four times as heavy as the elephant. Why doubt, then, that the sea can breed a snake to eclipse the boa-constrictor? Even if the creature had never been seen, I should, by mere reasoning from analogy, expect the sea to produce a serpent excelling the boa-constrictor, as the lobster excels a crayfish of our rivers: see how large things grow at sea! the salmon born in our rivers weighs in six months a quarter of a pound, or less; it goes out to sea, and comes back in one year weighing seven pounds. So far from doubting the large sea-serpents, I believe they exist by the million. The only thing that puzzles me is, why they should ever show a nose above water; they must be very numerous, I think."

Captain Hamilton laughed, and said, "Well, this *is* new. Doctor, in compliment to your opinion, we will go on deck, and inspect the reptile you think so common." He stopped at the door, and said, "Doctor, the saltcellar is by you. Would you mind bringing it on deck? We shall want a little to secure the animal."

So they all went on deck right merrily.

The captain went up a few ratlines in the mizzen rigging, and looked to windward, laughing all the time: but, all of a sudden, there was a great change in his manner. "Good heavens, it is alive — LUFF!"

The helmsman obeyed; the news spread like wildfire. Mess kids, grog kids, pipes, were all let fall, and some three hundred sailors clustered on the rigging like bees, to view the long-talked-of monster.

It was soon discovered to be moving lazily along, the propelling part being under water, and about twenty-five feet visible. It had a small head for so large a body, and, as they got nearer, rough scales were seen, ending

in smaller ones further down the body. It had a mane, but not like a lion's, as some have pretended. If you have ever seen a pony with a hog-mane, that was more the character of this creature's mane, if mane it was.

They got within a hundred yards of it, and all saw it plainly, scarce believing their senses.

When they could get no nearer for the wind, the captain yielded to that instinct which urges man always to kill a curiosity, "to encourage the rest," as saith the witty Voltaire. "Get ready a gun — best shot in the ship lay and fire it."

This was soon done. Bang went the gun. The shot struck the water close to the brute, and may have struck him under water, for aught I know. Any way, it sorely disturbed him; for he reared into the air a column of serpent's flesh that looked as thick as the maintopmast of a seventy-four, opened a mouth that looked capacious enough to swallow the largest buoy anchor in the ship, and, with a strange grating noise between a bark and a hiss, dived, and was seen no more.

When he was gone, they all looked at one another like men awaking from a dream.

Staines alone took it quite coolly. It did not surprise him in the least. He had always thought it incredible that the boa-constrictor should be larger than any sea-snake. That idea struck him as monstrous and absurd. He noted the sea-serpent in his journal, but with this doubt, "Semble — more like a very large eel."

Next day they crossed the line. Just before noon a young gentleman burst into Staines's cabin, apologizing for want of ceremony; but if Dr. Staines would like to see the line, it was now in sight from the mizzentop.

"Glad of it, sir," said Staines; "collect it for me in the ship's buckets, if you please. I want to send *a line* to friends at home."

Young gentleman buried his hands in his pockets, walked out in solemn silence, and resumed his position on the lee-side of the quarter-deck.

Nevertheless, this opening, coupled with what he had heard and read, made Staines a little uneasy, and he went to his friend Fitzroy, and said, "Now, look here: *I* am at the service of you experienced and humorous mariners. I plead guilty at once to the crime of never having passed the line; so, make ready your swabs, and lather me; your ship's scraper, and shave me; and let us get it over. But Lord Tadcaster is nervous, sensitive, prouder than he seems, and I'm not going to have him driven into a fit for all the Neptunes and Amphitrites in creation."

Fitzroy heard him out, then burst out laughing. "Why, there is none of that game in the Royal Navy," said he. "Hasn't been this twenty years."

"I'm so sorry," said Dr. Staines. "If there's a form of wit I revere, it is practical joking."

"Doctor, you are a satirical beggar."

Staines told Tadcaster, and he went forward and chaffed his friend the quartermaster, who was one of the forecastle wits.

"I say, quartermaster, why doesn't Neptune come on board?"

Dead silence.

"I wonder what has become of poor old Nep?"

"Gone ashore!" growled the seaman. "Last seen in Ratcliff Highway. Got a shop there — lends a shilling in the pound on seamen's advance tickets."

"Oh! and Amphitrite?"

"Married the sexton at Wapping."

"And the Nereids?"

"Neruds!" (scratching his head.) "I harn't kept my eye on them small craft. But I *believe* they are selling oysters in the port of Leith."

A light breeze carried them across the equator; but soon after they got becalmed, and it was dreary work, and the ship rolled gently, but continuously, and upset Lord Tadcaster's stomach again, and quenched his manly spirit.

At last they were fortunate enough to catch the south-east trade, but it was so languid at first that the ship barely moved through the water, though they set every stitch, and studding sails alow and aloft, till really she was acres of canvas.

While she was so creeping along, a man in the mizzen-top noticed an enormous shark gliding steadily in her wake. This may seem a small incident, yet it ran through the ship like wildfire, and caused more or less uneasiness in three hundred stout hearts; so near is every seaman to death, and so strong the persuasion in their superstitious minds, that a shark does not follow a ship pertinaciously without a prophetic instinct of calamity.

Unfortunately, the quartermaster conveyed this idea to Lord Tadcaster, and confirmed it by numerous examples to prove that there was always death at hand when a shark followed the ship.

Thereupon Tadcaster took it into his head that he was under a relapse, and the shark was waiting for his dead body: he got quite low-spirited.

Staines told Fitzroy. Fitzroy said, "Shark be hanged! I'll have him on deck in half an hour." He got leave from the captain: a hook was baited with a large piece of pork, and towed astern by a stout line, experienced old hands attending to it by turns.

The shark came up leisurely, surveyed the bait, and, I apprehend, ascertained the position of the hook. At all events, he turned quietly on his back, sucked the bait off, and retired to enjoy it.

Every officer in the ship tried him in turn, but with-

out success; for, if they got ready for him, and, the moment he took the bait, jerked the rope hard, in that case he opened his enormous mouth so wide that the bait and hook came out clear. But, sooner or later, he always got the bait, and left his captors the hook.

This went on for days, and his huge dorsal fin always in the ship's wake.

Then Tadcaster, who had watched these experiments with hope, lost his spirit and appetite.

Staines reasoned with him, but in vain. Somebody was to die; and, although there were three hundred and more in the ship, he must be the one. At last he actually made his will, and threw himself into Staines's arms, and gave him messages to his mother and Lady Cicely; and ended by frightening himself into a fit.

This roused Staines's pity, and also put him on his mettle. What, science be beaten by a shark!

He pondered the matter with all his might; and at last an idea came to him.

He asked the captain's permission to try his hand. This was accorded immediately, and the ship's stores placed at his disposal very politely, but with a sly, comical grin.

Dr. Staines got from the carpenter some sheets of zinc and spare copper, and some flannel: these he cut into three-inch squares, and soaked the flannel in acidulated water. He then procured a quantity of bell-wire, the greater part of which he insulated by wrapping it round with hot gutta percha. So eager was he, that he did not turn in all night.

In the morning he prepared what he called an electric fuse — he filled a soda-water bottle with gunpowder, attaching some cork to make it buoyant, put in the fuse and bung, made it water-tight, connected and insulated his main wires — enveloped the bottle in pork — tied a line to it, and let the bottle overboard.

The captain and officers shook their heads mysteriously. The tars peeped and grinned from every rope to see a doctor try and catch a shark with a soda-water bottle and no hook; but somehow the doctor seemed to know what he was about, so they hovered round, and awaited the result, mystified, but curious, and showing their teeth from ear to ear.

"The only thing I fear," said Staines, "is that, the moment he takes the bait, he will cut the wire before I can complete the circuit, and fire the fuse."

Nevertheless, there was another objection to the success of the experiment. The shark had disappeared.

"Well," said the captain, "at all events, you have frightened him away."

"No," said little Tadcaster, white as a ghost; "he is only under water, I know; waiting — waiting."

"There he is," cried one in the ratlines.

There was a rush to the taffrail — great excitement.

"Keep clear of me," said Staines quietly but firmly. "It can only be done at the moment before he cuts the wire."

The old shark swam slowly round the bait.

He saw it was something new.

He swam round and round it.

"He won't take it," said one.

"He suspects something."

"Oh, yes, he will take the meat somehow, and leave the pepper. Sly old fox!"

"He has eaten many a poor Jack, that one."

The shark turned slowly on his back, and, instead of grabbing at the bait, seemed to draw it by gentle suction into that capacious throat, ready to blow it out in a moment if it was not all right.

The moment the bait was drawn out of sight, Staines completed the circuit; the bottle exploded with a fury

that surprised him and everybody who saw it; a ton of water flew into the air, and came down in spray, and a gory carcass floated, belly uppermost, visibly staining the blue water.

There was a roar of amazement and applause.

The carcass was towed alongside, at Tadcaster's urgent request, and then the power of the explosion was seen. Confined, first by the bottle, then by the meat, then by the fish, and lastly by the water, it had exploded with tenfold power, had blown the brute's head into a million atoms, and had even torn a great furrow in its carcass, exposing three feet of the backbone.

Taddy gloated on his enemy, and began to pick up again from that hour.

The wind improved, and, as usual in that latitude, scarcely varied a point. They had a pleasant time, — private theatricals and other amusements till they got to latitude 26° S. and longitude 27° W. Then the trade wind deserted them. Light and variable winds succeeded.

The master complained of the chronometers, and the captain thought it his duty to verify or correct them; and so shaped his course for the island of Tristan d'Acunha, then lying a little way out of his course. I ought, perhaps, to explain to the general reader that the exact position of this island being long ago established and recorded, it was an infallible guide to go by in verifying a ship's chronometers.

Next day the glass fell all day, and the captain said he should double-reef topsails at nightfall, for something was brewing.

The weather, however, was fine, and the ship was sailing very fast, when, about half an hour before sunset, the mast-head man hailed that there was a bulk of timber in sight, broad on the weather-bow.

The signalman was sent up, and said it looked like a raft.

The captain, who was on deck, levelled his glass at it, and made it out a raft, with a sort of rail to it, and the stump of a mast.

He ordered the officer of the watch to keep the ship as close to the wind as possible. He should like to examine it if he could.

The master represented, respectfully, that it would be unadvisable to beat to windward for that. "I have no faith in our chronometers, sir, and it is important to make the island before dark; fogs rise here so suddenly."

"Very well, Mr. Bolt; then I suppose we must let the raft go."

"MAN ON THE RAFT TO WINDWARD!" hailed the signalman.

This electrified the ship. The captain ran up the mizzen rigging, and scanned the raft, now nearly abeam.

"It *is* a man!" he cried, and was about to alter the ship's course when, at that moment, the signalman hailed again, —

"IT IS A CORPSE."

"How d'ye know?"

"By the gulls."

Then succeeded an exciting dialogue between the captain and the master, who, being in his department, was very firm; and went so far as to say he would not answer for the safety of the ship, if they did not sight the land before dark.

The captain said, "Very well," and took a turn or two. But at last he said, "No. Her Majesty's ship must not pass a raft with a man on it, dead or alive."

He then began to give the necessary orders; but before they were all out of his mouth, a fatal interruption occurred.

Tadcaster ran into Dr. Staines's cabin, crying, "A raft with a corpse close by!"

Staines sprang to the quarter port to see, and craning eagerly out, the lower port chain, which had not been well secured, slipped, the port gave way, and as his whole weight rested on it, canted him headlong into the sea.

A smart seaman in the forechains saw the accident, and instantly roared out, "MAN OVERBOARD!" a cry that sends a thrill through a ship's very ribs.

Another smart fellow cut the life-buoy adrift so quickly that it struck the water within ten yards of Staines.

The officer of the watch, without the interval of half a moment, gave the right orders, in the voice of a stentor:

"Let go life-buoy.

"Life-boat's crew away.

"Hands shorten sail.

"Mainsel up.

"Main topsel to mast."

These orders were executed with admirable swiftness. Meantime there was a mighty rush of feet throughout the frigate, every hatchway was crammed with men eager to force their way on deck.

In five seconds the middy of the watch and half her crew were in the lee cutter, fitted with Clifford's apparatus.

"Lower away!" cried the excited officer; "the others will come down by the pendants."

The man stationed, sitting on the bottom boards, eased away roundly, when suddenly there was a hitch — the boat would go no farther.

"Lower away there in the cutter! Why don't you lower?" screamed the captain, who had come over to leeward expecting to see the boat in the water.

"The rope has swollen, sir, and the pendants won't unreeve," cried the middy in agony.

"Volunteers for the weather-boat!" shouted the first

lieutenant; but the order was unnecessary, for more than the proper number were in her already.

"Plug in — lower away."

But mishaps never come singly. Scarcely had this boat gone a foot from the davit, than the volunteer who was acting as coxswain, in reaching out for something, inadvertently let go the line, which, in Kynaston's apparatus, keeps the tackles hooked; consequently, down went the boat and crew twenty feet, with a terrific crash; the men were struggling for their lives, and the boat was stove.

But, meantime, more men having been sent into the lee cutter, their weight caused the pendants to render, and the boat got afloat, and was soon employed picking up the struggling crew.

Seeing this, Lieutenant Fitzroy collected some hands, and lowered the life-boat gig, which was fitted with common tackles, got down into her himself by the falls, and pulling round to windward, shouted to the signalman for directions.

The signalman was at his post, and had fixed his eye on the man overboard, as his duty was; but his messmate was in the stove boat, and he had cast one anxious look down to see if he was saved, and, sad to relate, in that one moment he had lost sight of Staines; the sudden darkness — there was no twilight — confused him more, and the ship had increased her drift.

Fitzroy, however, made a rapid calculation, and pulled to windward with all his might. He was followed in about a minute by the other sound boat powerfully manned, and both boats melted away into the night.

There was a long and anxious suspense, during which it became pitch dark, and the ship burned blue lights to mark her position more plainly to the crews that were groping the sea for that beloved passenger.

Captain Hamilton had no doubt that the fate of Staines was decided, one way or other, long before this; but he kept quiet until he saw the plain signs of a squall at hand. Then, as he was responsible for the safety of boats and ship, he sent up rockets to recall them.

The cutter came alongside first. Lights were poured on her, and quavering voices asked, "Have you got him?"

The answer was dead silence, and sorrowful, drooping heads.

Sadly and reluctantly was the order given to hoist the boat in.

Then the gig came alongside. Fitzroy seated in her, with his hands before his face; the men gloomy and sad.

"GONE! GONE!"

Soon the ship was battling a heavy squall.

At midnight all quiet again, and hove to. Then, at the request of many, the bell was tolled, and the ship's company mustered bareheaded, and many a stout seaman in tears, as the last service was read for Christopher Staines.

CHAPTER XIV.

Rosa fell ill with grief at the hotel, and could not move for some days; but the moment she was strong enough, she insisted on leaving Plymouth: like all wounded things, she must drag herself home.

But what a home! How empty it struck, and she heart-sick and desolate. Now all the familiar places wore a new aspect: the little yard, where he had so walked and waited, became a temple to her, and she came out and sat in it, and now first felt to the full how much he had suffered there — with what fortitude. She crept about the house, and kissed the chair he had sat in, and every much-used place and thing of the departed.

Her shallow nature deepened and deepened under this bereavement, of which, she said to herself, with a shudder, she was the cause. And this is the course of nature; there is nothing like suffering to enlighten the giddy brain, widen the narrow mind, improve the trivial heart.

As her regrets were tender and deep, so her vows of repentance were sincere. Oh, what a wife she would make when he came back! how thoughtful! how prudent! how loyal! and never have a secret. She who had once said, "What is the use of your writing? nobody will publish it," now collected and perused every written scrap. With simple affection she even locked up his very waste-paper basket, full of fragments he had torn, or useless papers he had thrown there, before he went to Plymouth.

In the drawer of his writing-table she found his diary. It was a thick quarto: it began with their marriage, and

ended with his leaving home — for then he took another volume. This diary became her Bible; she studied it daily, till her tears hid his lines. The entries were very miscellaneous, very exact; it was a map of their married life. But what she studied most was his observations on her own character, so scientific, yet so kindly; and his scholar-like and wise reflections. The book was an unconscious picture of a great mind she had hitherto but glanced at: now she saw it all plain before her; saw it, understood it, adored it, mourned it. Such women are shallow, not for want of a head upon their shoulders, but of *attention.* They do not really study anything: they have been taught at their schools the bad art of skimming; but let their hearts compel their brains to think and think, the result is considerable. The deepest philosopher never fathomed a character more thoroughly than this poor child fathomed her philosopher, when she had read his journal ten or eleven times, and bedewed it with a thousand tears.

One passage almost cut her more intelligent heart in twain: —

"This dark day I have done a thing incredible. I have spoken with brutal harshness to the innocent creature I have sworn to protect. She had run in debt, through inexperience, and that unhappy timidity which makes women conceal an error till it ramifies, by concealment, into a fault; and I must storm and rave at her, till she actually fainted away. Brute! Ruffian! Monster! And she, how did she punish me, poor lamb? By soft and tender words — like a lady, as she is. Oh, my sweet Rosa, I wish you could know how you are avenged. Talk of the scourge — the cat! I would be thankful for two dozen lashes. Ah! there is no need, I think, to punish a man who has been cruel to a woman. Let him alone. He will punish himself more than you can, if he is really a man."

From the date of that entry, this self-reproach and self-torture kept cropping up every now and then in the diary; and it appeared to have been not entirely without its influence in sending Staines to sea, though the main reason he gave was that his Rosa might have the comforts and luxuries she had enjoyed before she married him.

One day, while she was crying over this diary, Uncle Philip called; but not to comfort her, I promise you. He burst on her, irate, to take her to task. He had returned, learned Christopher's departure, and settled the reason in his own mind: that uxorious fool was gone to sea by a natural reaction; his eyes were open to his wife at last, and he was sick of her folly; so he had fled to distant climes, as who would not, that could?

"*So*, ma'am," said he, "my nephew is gone to sea, I find — all in a hurry. Pray may I ask what he has done that for?"

It was a very simple question, yet it did not elicit a very plain answer. She only stared at this abrupt inquisitor, and then cried, piteously, "Oh, Uncle Philip!" and burst out sobbing.

"Why, what is the matter?"

"You *will* hate me now. He is gone to make money for *me;* and I would rather have lived on a crust. Uncle — don't hate me. I'm a poor, bereaved, heart-broken creature, that repents."

"Repents! heigho! why, what have you been up to now, ma'am? No great harm, I'll be bound. Flirting a little with some *fool* — eh?"

"Flirting! Me! a married woman."

"Oh, to be sure; I forgot. Why, surely he has not deserted you."

"My Christopher desert me! He loves me too well; far more than I deserve; but not more than I will.

Uncle Philip, I am too confused and wretched to tell you all that has happened; but I know you love him, though you had a tiff: uncle, he called on you, to shake hands and ask your forgiveness, poor fellow! He was so sorry you were away. Please read his dear diary: it will tell you all, better than his poor foolish wife can. I know it by heart. I'll show you where you and he quarrelled about me. There, see." And she showed him the passage with her finger. "He never told me it was that, or I would have come and begged your pardon on my knees. But see how sorry he was. There, see. And now I'll show you another place, where my Christopher speaks of your many, many acts of kindness. There, see. And now please let me show you how he longed for reconciliation. There, see. And it is the same through the book. And now I'll show you how grieved he was to go without your blessing. I told him I was sure you would give him that, and him going away. Ah, me! will he ever return? Uncle dear, don't hate me. What shall I do, now he is gone, if you disown me? Why, you are the only Staines left me to love."

"Disown you, ma'am! that I'll never do. You are a good-hearted young woman, I find. There, run and dry your eyes; and let me read Christopher's diary all through. Then I shall see how the land lies."

Rosa complied with his proposal; and left him alone while she bathed her eyes, and tried to compose herself, for she was all trembling at this sudden irruption.

When she returned to the drawing-room, he was walking about, looking grave and thoughtful.

"It is the old story," said he, rather gently: "a *misunderstanding.* How wise our ancestors were that first used that word to mean a quarrel! for, look into twenty quarrels, and you shall detect a score of mis-under-standings. Yet our American cousins must go and substitute

the un-ideaed word 'difficulty;' that is wonderful. I had no quarrel with him: delighted to see either of you. But I had called twice on him; so I thought he ought to get over his temper, and call on a tried friend like me. A misunderstanding! Now, my dear, let us have no more of these misunderstandings. You will always be welcome at my house, and I shall often come here and look after you and your interests. What do you mean to do, I wonder?"

"Sir, I am to go home to my father, if he will be troubled with me. I have written to him."

"And what is to become of the Bijou?"

"My Christie thought I should like to part with it, and the furniture — but his own writing-desk and his chair, no, I never will, and his little clock. Oh! oh! oh! — But I remember what you said about agents, and I don't know what to do; for I shall be away."

"Then, leave it to me. I'll come and live here with one servant; and I'll soon sell it for you."

"You, Uncle Philip!"

"Well, why not?" said he roughly.

"That will be a great trouble and discomfort to you, I'm afraid."

"If I find it so, I'll soon drop it. I'm not the fool to put myself out for anybody. When you are ready to go out, send me word, and I'll come in."

Soon after this he bustled off. He gave her a sort of hurried kiss at parting, as if he was ashamed of it, and wanted it over as quickly as possible.

Next day her father came, condoled with her politely, assured her there was nothing to cry about; husbands were a sort of functionaries that generally went to sea at some part of their career, and no harm ever came of it. On the contrary, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," said this judicious parent.

This sentiment happened to be just a little too true, and set the daughter crying bitterly. But she fought against it. "Oh no!" said she, "I *mustn't.* I will not be always crying in Kent Villa."

"Lord forbid!"

"I shall get over it in time — a little."

"Why, of course you will. But as to your coming to Kent Villa, I am afraid you would not be very comfortable there. You know I am superannuated. Only got my pension now."

"I know that, papa: and — why, that is one of the reasons. I have a good income now; and I thought if we put our means together" —

"Oh, that is a very different thing. You will want a carriage, I suppose. I have put mine down."

"No carriage; no horse; no footman; no luxury of any kind till my Christie comes back. I abhor dress; I abhor expense; I loathe everything I once liked too well; I detest every folly that has parted us; and I hate myself worst of all. Oh! oh! oh! Forgive me for crying so."

"Well, I dare say there are associations about this place that upset you. I shall go and make ready for you, dear; and then you can come as soon as you like."

He bestowed a paternal kiss on her brow, and glided doucely away before she could possibly cry again.

The very next week Rosa was at Kent Villa, with the relics of her husband about her; his chair, his writing-table, his clock, his waste-paper basket, a very deep and large one. She had them all in her bedroom at Kent Villa.

Here the days glided quietly but heavily.

She derived some comfort from Uncle Philip. His rough, friendly way was a tonic, and braced her. He called several times about the Bijou. Told her he had

put up enormous boards all over the house, and puffed it finely. "I have had a hundred agents at me," said he; "and the next thing, I hope, will be one customer; that is about the proportion." At last he wrote her he had hooked a victim, and sold the lease and furniture for nine hundred guineas. Staines had assigned the lease to Rosa, so she had full powers; and Philip invested the money, and two hundred more she gave him, in a little mortgage at six per cent.

Now came the letter from Madeira. It gave her new life. Christopher was well, contented, hopeful. His example should animate her. She would bravely bear the present, and share his hopes of the future: with these brighter views Nature co-operated. The instincts of approaching maternity brightened the future. She fell into gentle reveries, and saw her husband return, and saw herself place their infant in his arms with all a wife's, a mother's pride.

In due course came another long letter from the equator, with a full journal, and more words of hope. Home in less than a year, with reputation increased by this last cure; home, to part no more.

Ah! what a changed wife he should find! how frugal, how candid, how full of appreciation, admiration, and love, of the noblest, dearest husband that ever breathed!

Lady Cicely Treherne waited some weeks, to let kinder sentiments return. She then called in Dear Street, but found Mrs. Staines was gone to Gravesend. She wrote to her.

In a few days she received a reply, studiously polite and cold.

This persistent injustice mortified her at last. She said to herself, "Does she think his departure was no loss to *me?* It was to her interests, as well as his, I sacrificed my own selfish wishes. I will write to her no more."

This resolution she steadily maintained. It was shaken for a moment, when she heard, by a side wind, that Mrs. Staines was fast approaching the great pain and peril of women. Then she wavered. But no. She prayed for her by name in the Liturgy, but she troubled her no more.

This state of things lasted some six weeks, when she received a letter from her cousin Tadcaster, close on the heels of his last, to which she had replied as I have indicated. She knew his handwriting, and opened it with a smile.

That smile soon died off her horror-stricken face. The letter ran thus: —

TRISTAN D'ACUNHA, Jan. 5.

DEAR CICELY, — A terrible thing has just happened. We signalled a raft, with a body on it, and poor Dr. Staines leaned out of the port-hole, and fell overboard. Three boats were let down after him; but it all went wrong, somehow, or it was too late. They could never find him, he was drowned; and the funeral service was read for the poor fellow.

We are all sadly cut up. Everybody loved him. It was dreadful next day at dinner, when his chair was empty. The very sailors cried at not finding him.

First of all, I thought I ought to write to his wife. I know where she lives; it is called Kent Villa, Gravesend. But I was afraid; it might kill her: and you are so good and sensible, I thought I had better write to you, and perhaps you could break it to her by degrees, before it gets in all the papers.

I send this from the island, by a small vessel, and paid him ten pounds to take it.

Your affectionate cousin,

TADCASTER.

Words are powerless to describe a blow like this: the amazement, the stupor, the reluctance to believe — the rising, swelling, surging horror. She sat like a woman of stone, crumpling the letter. "Dead! — dead?"

For a long time this was all her mind could realize — that Christopher Staines was dead. He who had been so full of life and thought and genius, and worthier to live than all the world, was dead; and a million nobodies were still alive, and he was dead.

She lay back on the sofa, and all the power left her limbs. She could not move a hand.

But suddenly she started up; for a noble instinct told her this blow must not fall on the wife as it had on her, and in her time of peril.

She had her bonnet on in a moment, and for the first time in her life, darted out of the house without her maid. She flew along the streets, scarcely feeling the ground. She got to Dear Street, and obtained Philip Staines's address. She flew to it, and there learned he was down at Kent Villa. Instantly she telegraphed to her maid to come down to her at Gravesend, with things for a short visit, and wait for her at the station; and she went down by train to Gravesend.

Hitherto she had walked on air, driven by one overpowering impulse. Now, as she sat in the train, she thought a little of herself. What was before her? To break to Mrs. Staines that her husband was dead. To tell her all her misgivings were more than justified. To encounter her cold civility, and let her know, inch by inch, it must be exchanged for curses and tearing of hair; her husband was dead. To tell her this, and in the telling of it, perhaps reveal that it was *her* great bereavement, as well as the wife's, for she had a deeper affection for him than she ought.

Well, she trembled like an aspen leaf, trembled like one in an ague, even as she sat. But she persevered.

A noble woman has her courage; not exactly the same as that which leads forlorn hopes against bastions bristling with rifles and tongued with flames and thunderbolts; yet not inferior to it.

Tadcaster, small and dull, but noble by birth and instinct, had seen the right thing for her to do; and she, of the same breed, and nobler far, had seen it too; and the great soul steadily drew the recoiling heart and quivering body to this fiery trial, this act of humanity — to do which was terrible and hard, to shirk it, cowardly and cruel.

She reached Gravesend, and drove in a fly to Kent Villa.

The door was opened by a maid.

"Is Mrs. Staines at home?"

"Yes, ma'am, she is *at home:* but —"

"Can I see her?"

"Why, no, ma'am, not at present."

"But I must see her. I am an old friend. Please take her my card. Lady Cicely Treherne."

The maid hesitated, and looked confused. "Perhaps you don't know, ma'am. Mrs. Staines, she is — the doctor have been in the house all day."

"Ah, the doctor! I believe Dr. Philip Staines is here."

"Why, that *is* the doctor, ma'am. Yes, he is here."

"Then, pray let me see him — or no; I had better see Mr. Lusignan."

"Master have gone out for the day, ma'am; but if you'll step in the drawing-room, I'll tell the doctor."

Lady Cicely waited in the drawing-room some time, heart-sick and trembling.

At last Dr. Philip came in, with her card in his hand, looking evidently a little cross at the interruption. "Now, madam, please tell me, as briefly as you can, what I can do for you."

"Are you Dr. Philip Staines?"

"I am, madam, at your service — for five minutes. Can't quit my patient long, just now."

"Oh, sir, thank God I have found you. Be prepared for ill news — sad news — a terrible calamity — I can't speak. Read that, sir." And she handed him Tadcaster's note.

He took it, and read it.

He buried his face in his hands. "Christopher! my poor, poor boy!" he groaned. But suddenly a terrible anxiety seized him. "Who knows of this?" he asked.

"Only myself, sir. I came here to break it to her."

"You are a good, kind lady, for being so thoughtful. Madam, if this gets to my niece's ears, it will kill her, as sure as we stand here."

"Then let us keep it from her. Command me, sir. I will do anything. I will live here — take the letters in — the journals — anything."

"No, no; you have done your part, and God bless you for it. You must not stay here. Your ladyship's very presence, and your agitation, would set the servants talking, and some idiot-fiend among them babbling — there is nothing so terrible as a fool."

"May I remain at the inn, sir; just one night?"

"Oh yes, I wish you would; and I will run over, if all is well with her — well with her? poor unfortunate girl!"

Lady Cicely saw he wished her gone, and she went directly.

At nine o'clock that same evening, as she lay on a sofa in the best room of the inn, attended by her maid, Dr. Philip Staines came to her. She dismissed her maid.

Dr. Philip was too old, in other words, had lost too many friends, to be really broken down by bereavement; but he was strangely subdued. The loud tones were out of him, and the loud laugh, and even the keen sneer. Yet he was the same man; but with a gentler surface; and this was not without its pathos.

"Well, madam," said he gravely and quietly. "It is as it always has been. 'As is the race of leaves, so that of man.' When one falls, another comes. Here's a little Christopher come, in place of him that is gone: a brave, beautiful boy, ma'am; the finest but one I ever brought into the world. He is come to take his father's place in our hearts — I see you valued his poor father, ma'am — but he comes too late for me. At your age, ma'am, friendships come naturally; they spring like loves in the soft heart of youth: at seventy, the gate is not so open; the soil is more sterile. I shall never care for another Christopher; never see another grow to man's estate."

"The mother, sir," sobbed Lady Cicely; "the poor mother?"

"Like them all — poor creature: in heaven, madam; in heaven. New life! new existence! a new character. All the pride, glory, rapture, and amazement of maternity — thanks to her ignorance, which we must prolong, or I would not give one straw for her life, or her son's. I shall never leave the house till she does know it, and come when it may, I dread the hour. She is not framed by nature to bear so deadly a shock."

"Her father, sir. Would he not be the best person to break it to her? He was out to-day."

"Her father, ma'am? I shall get no help from him. He is one of those soft, gentle creatures, that come into the world with what your canting fools call a mission; and his mission is to take care of number one. Not dishonestly, mind you, nor violently, nor rudely, but doucely and calmly. The care a brute like me takes of his vitals, that care Lusignan takes of his outer cuticle. His number one is a sensitive plant. No scenes, no noise; nothing painful — by-the-by, the little creature that writes in the papers, and calls calamities *painful*, is

of Lusignan's breed. Out to-day! of course he was out, ma'am: he knew from me his daughter would be in peril all day, so he visited a friend. He knew his own tenderness, and evaded paternal sensibilities: a self-defender. I count on no help from that charming man."

"A man! I call such creachaas weptiles!" said Lady Cicely, her ghastly cheek coloring for a moment.

"Then you give them a false importance."

In the course of this interview, Lady Cicely accused herself sadly of having interfered between man and wife, and with the best intentions brought about this cruel calamity. "Judge, then, sir," said she, "how grateful I am to you for undertaking this cruel task. I was her schoolfellow, sir, and I love her dearly; but she has turned against me, and now, oh, with what horror she will regard me!"

"Madam," said the doctor, "there is nothing more mean and unjust than to judge others by events that none could foresee. Your conscience is clear. You did your best for my poor nephew: but Fate willed it otherwise. As for my niece, she has many virtues, but justice is one you must not look for in that quarter. Justice requires brains. It's a virtue the heart does not deal in. You must be content with your own good conscience, and an old man's esteem. You did all for the best; and this very day you have done a good, kind action. God bless you for it!"

Then he left her; and next day she went sadly home, and for many a long day the hollow world saw nothing of Cicely Treherne.

When Mr. Lusignan came home that night, Dr. Philip told him the miserable story, and his fears. He received it, not as Philip had expected. The bachelor had counted without his dormant paternity. He was terror-stricken — abject — fell into a chair, and wrung his hands, and

wept piteously. To keep it from his daughter till she should be stronger, seemed to him chimerical, impossible. However, Philip insisted it must be done; and he must make some excuse for keeping out of her way, or his manner would rouse her suspicions. He consented readily to that, and indeed left all to Dr. Philip.

Dr. Philip trusted nobody; not even his own confidential servant. He allowed no journal to come into the house without passing through his hands, and he read them all before he would let any other soul in the house see them. He asked Rosa to let him be her secretary and open her letters, giving as a pretext that it would be as well she should have no small worries or trouble just now.

"Why," said she, "I was never so well able to bear them. It must be a great thing to put me out now. I am so happy, and live in the future. Well, dear uncle, you can if you like — what does it matter? — only there must be one exception: my own Christie's letters, you know."

"Of course," said he, wincing inwardly.

The very next day came a letter of condolence from Miss Lucas. Dr. Philip intercepted it, and locked it up, to be shown her at a more fitting time.

But how could he hope to keep so public a thing as this from entering the house in one of a hundred newspapers?

He went into Gravesend, and searched all the newspapers, to see what he had to contend with. To his horror, he found it in several dailies and weeklies, and in two illustrated papers. He sat aghast at the difficulty and the danger.

The best thing he could think of was to buy them all, and cut out the account. He did so, and brought all the papers, thus mutilated, into the house, and sent them

into the kitchen. He said to his old servant, "These may amuse Mr. Lusignan's people, and I have extracted all that interests me."

By these means he hoped that none of the servants would go and buy more of these same papers elsewhere.

Notwithstanding these precautions, he took the nurse apart, and said, "Now, you are an experienced woman, and to be trusted about an excitable patient. Mind, I object to any female servant entering Mrs. Staines's room with gossip. Keep them outside the door for the present, please. Oh, and nurse, if anything should happen, likely to grieve or to worry her, it must be kept from her entirely: can I trust you?"

"You may, sir."

"I shall add ten guineas to your fee, if she gets through the month without a shock or disturbance of any kind."

She stared at him, inquiringly. Then she said, —

"You may rely on me, doctor."

"I feel I may. Still, she alarms me. She looks quiet enough, but she is very excitable."

Not all these precautions gave Dr. Philip any real sense of security; still less did they to Mr. Lusignan. He was not a tender father, in small things, but the idea of actual danger to his only child was terrible to him; and he now passed his life in a continual tremble.

This is the less to be wondered at, when I tell you that even the stout Philip began to lose his nerve, his appetite, his sleep, under this hourly terror and this hourly torture.

Well did the great imagination of antiquity feign a torment, too great for the mind long to endure, in the sword of Damocles suspended by a single hair over his head. Here the sword hung over an innocent creature,

who smiled beneath it, fearless; but these two old men must sit and watch the sword, and ask themselves how long before that subtle salvation shall snap.

"Ill news travels fast," says the proverb. "The birds of the air shall carry the matter," says Holy Writ; and it is so. No bolts nor bars, no promises nor precautions, can long shut out a great calamity from the ears it is to blast, the heart it is to wither. The very air seems full of it, until it falls.

Rosa's child was more than a fortnight old; and she was looking more beautiful than ever, as is often the case with a very young mother, and Dr. Philip complimented her on her looks. "Now," said he, "you reap the advantage of being good, and obedient, and keeping quiet. In another ten days or so, I may take you to the seaside for a week. I have the honor to inform you that from about the fourth to the tenth of March there is always a week of fine weather, which takes everybody by surprise, except me. It does not astonish me, because I observe it is invariable. Now, what would you say if I gave you a week at Herne Bay, to set you up altogether?"

"As you please, dear uncle," said Mrs. Staines, with a sweet smile. "I shall be very happy to go, or to stay. I shall be happy everywhere, with my darling boy, and the thought of my husband. Why, I count the days till he shall come back to me. No, to us; to us, my pet. How dare a naughty mammy say to 'me,' as if 'me' was half the 'portance of oo, a precious pets!"

Dr. Philip was surprised into a sigh.

"What is the matter, dear?" said Rosa, very quickly.

"The matter?"

"Yes, dear, the matter. You sighed; you, the laughing philosopher."

"Did I?" said he, to gain time. "Perhaps I remem-

bered the uncertainty of human life, and of all mortal hopes. The old will have their thoughts, my dear. They have seen so much trouble."

"But, uncle dear, he is a very healthy child."

"Very."

"And you told me yourself carelessness was the cause so many children die."

"That is true."

She gave him a curious and rather searching look; then, leaning over her boy, said, "Mammy's not afraid. Beautiful Pet was not born to die directly. He will never leave his mam-ma. No, uncle, he never can. For my life is bound in his and his dear father's. It is a triple cord: one go, go all."

She said this with a quiet resolution that chilled Uncle Philip.

At this moment the nurse, who had been bending so pertinaciously over some work that her eyes were invisible, looked quickly up, cast a furtive glance at Mrs. Staines, and finding she was employed for the moment, made an agitated signal to Dr. Philip. All she did was to clench her two hands and lift them half was to her face, and then cast a frightened look towards the door; but Philip's senses were so sharpened by constant alarm and watching, that he saw at once something serious was the matter. But as he had asked himself what he should do in case of some sudden alarm, he merely gave a nod of intelligence to the nurse, scarcely perceptible, then rose quietly from his seat, and went to the window. "Snow coming, I think," said he. "For all that we shall have the March summer in ten days. You mark my words." He then went leisurely out of the room; at the door he turned, and, with all the cunning he was master of, said, "Oh, by the by, come to my room, nurse, when you are at leisure."

"Yes, doctor," said the nurse, but never moved. She was too bent on hiding the agitation she really felt.

"Had you not better go to him, nurse?"

"Perhaps I had, madam."

She rose with feigned indifference, and left the room. She walked leisurely down the passage, then, casting a hasty glance behind her, for fear Mrs. Staines should be watching her, hurried into the doctor's room. They met at once in the middle of the room, and Mrs. Briscoe burst out, "Sir, it is known all over the house!"

"Heaven forbid! What is known?"

"What you would give the world to keep from her. Why, sir, the moment you cautioned me, of course I saw there was trouble. But little I thought — sir, not a servant in the kitchen or the stable but knows that her husband — poor thing! poor thing! — Ah! there goes the housemaid — to have a look at her."

"Stop her!"

Mrs. Briscoe had not waited for this; she rushed after the woman, and told her Mrs. Staines was sleeping, and the room must not be entered on any account.

"Oh, very well," said the maid, rather sullenly.

Mrs. Briscoe saw her return to the kitchen, and came back to Dr. Staines; he was pacing the room in torments of anxiety.

"Doctor," said she, "it is the old story: 'Servants' friends, the master's enemies.' An old servant came here to gossip with her friend the cook (she never could abide her while they were together, by all accounts), and told her the whole story of his being drowned at sea."

Dr. Philip groaned, "Cursed chatterbox!" said he. "What is to be done? Must we break it to her now? Oh, if I could only buy a few days more! The heart to be crushed while the body is weak! It is too cruel.

Advise me, Mrs. Briscoe. You are an experienced woman, and I think you are a kind-hearted woman."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Briscoe, "I had the name of it, when I was younger — before Briscoe failed, and I took to nursing; which it hardens, sir, by use, and along of the patients themselves; for sick folk are lumps of selfishness; we see more of them than you do, sir. But this I *will* say, 'tisn't selfishness that lies now in that room, waiting for the blow that will bring her to death's door, I'm sore afraid; but a sweet, gentle, thoughtful creature, as ever supped sorrow; for I don't know how 'tis, doctor, nor why 'tis, but an angel like that has always to sup sorrow."

"But you do not advise me," said the doctor, in agitation, "and something must be done."

"Advise you, sir; it is not for me to do that. I am sure I'm at my wits' ends, poor thing! Well, sir, I don't see what you can do, but try and break it to her. Better so, than let it come to her like a clap of thunder. But I think, sir, I'd have a wet-nurse ready, before I said much: for she is very quick — and ten to one but the first word of such a thing turns her blood to gall. Sir, I once knew a poor woman — she was a carpenter's wife — a-nursing her child in the afternoon — and in runs a foolish woman, and tells her he was killed dead, off a scaffold. 'Twas the man's sister told her. Well, sir, she was knocked stupid like, and she sat staring, and nursing of her child, before she could take it in rightly. The child was dead before supper-time, and the woman was not long after. The whole family was swept away, sir, in a few hours, and I mind the table was not cleared he had dined on, when they came to lay them out. Well-a-day, nurses see sorrow!"

"We all see sorrow that live long, Mrs. Briscoe. I am heart-broken myself; I am desperate. You are a

good soul, and I'll tell you. When my nephew married this poor girl, I was very angry with him; and I soon found she was not fit to be a struggling man's wife; and then I was very angry with her. She had spoiled a first-rate physician, I thought. But, since I knew her better, it is all changed. She is so lovable. How I shall ever tell her this terrible thing, God knows. All I know is, that I will not throw a chance away. Her body *shall* be stronger, before I break her heart. Cursed idiots, that could not save a single man, with their boats, in a calm sea! Lord forgive me for blaming people, when I was not there to see. I say I will give her every chance. She shall not know it till she is stronger: no, not if I live at her door, and sleep there, and all. Good God! inspire me with something. There is always something to be done, if one could but see it."

Mrs. Briscoe sighed and said, "Sir, I think anything is better than for her to hear it from a servant — and they are sure to blurt it out. Young women are such fools."

"No, no; I see what it is," said Dr. Philip. "I have gone all wrong from the first. I have been acting like a woman, when I should have acted like a man. Why, I only trusted *you* by halves. There was a fool for you. Never trust people by halves."

"That is true, sir."

"Well, then, now I shall go at it like a man. I have a vile opinion of servants; but no matter. I'll try them: they are human, I suppose. I'll hit them between the eyes like a man. Go to the kitchen, Mrs. Briscoe, and tell them I wish to speak to all the servants, indoors or out."

"Yes, sir."

She stopped at the door, and said, "I had better get back to her, as soon as I have told them."

"Certainly."

"And what shall I tell her, sir? Her first word will be to ask me what you wanted me for. I saw that in her eye. She was curious: that is why she sent me after you so quick."

Dr. Philip groaned. He felt he was walking among pitfalls. He rapidly flavored some distilled water with orange-flower, then tinted it a beautiful pink, and bottled it. "There," said he; "I was mixing a new medicine. Tablespoon, four times a day: had to filter it. Any lie you like."

Mrs. Briscoe went to the kitchen, and gave her message: then went to Mrs. Staines with the mixture.

Dr. Philip went down to the kitchen, and spoke to the servants very solemnly. He said, "My good friends, I am come to ask your help in a matter of life and death. There is a poor young woman up-stairs; she is a widow, and does not know it; and must not know it yet. If the blow fell now, I think it would kill her: indeed, if she hears it all of a sudden, at any time, that might destroy her. We are in so sore a strait that a feather may turn the scale. So we must try all we can to gain a little time, and then trust to God's mercy after all. Well, now, what do you say? Will you help me keep it from her, till the tenth of March, say? and then I will break it to her by degrees. Forget she is your mistress. Master and servant, that is all very well at a proper time; but this is the time to remember nothing but that we are all one flesh and blood. We lie down together in the churchyard, and we hope to rise together where there will be no master and servant. Think of the poor unfortunate creature as your own flesh and blood, and tell me, will you help me try and save her, under this terrible blow?"

"Ay, doctor, that we will," said the footman. "Only you give us our orders, and you will see."

"I have no right to give you orders; but I entreat you not to show her by word or look, that calamity is upon her. Alas! it is only a reprieve you can give her and to me. The bitter hour *must* come when I must tell her she is a widow, and her boy an orphan. When that day comes, I will ask you all to pray for me that I may find words. But now I ask you to give me that ten days' reprieve. Let the poor creature recover a little strength, before the thunderbolt of affliction falls on her head. Will you promise me?"

They promised heartily; and more than one of the women began to cry.

"A general assent will not satisfy me," said Dr. Philip. "I want every man, and every woman, to give me a hand upon it; then I shall feel sure of you."

The men gave him their hands at once. The women wiped their hands with their aprons, to make sure they were clean, and gave him their hands too. The cook said, "If any one of us goes from it, this kitchen will be too hot to hold her."

"Nobody will go from it, cook," said the doctor. "I'm not afraid of that; and now since you have promised me, out of your own good hearts, I'll try and be even with you. If she knows nothing of it by the tenth of March, five guineas to every man and woman in this kitchen. You shall see that, if you can be kind, we can be grateful."

He then hurried away. He found Mr. Lusignan in the drawing-room, and told him all this. Lusignan was fluttered, but grateful. "Ah, my good friend," said he, "this is a hard trial to two old men, like you and me."

"It is," said Philip. "It has shown me my age. I declare I am trembling; I, whose nerves were iron. But

I have a particular contempt for servants. Mercenary wretches! I think Heaven inspired me to talk to them. After all, who knows? perhaps we might find a way to their hearts, if we did not eternally shock their vanity, and forget that it is, and must be, far greater than our own. The women gave me their tears, and the men were earnest. Not one hand lay cold in mine. As for your kitchen-maid, I'd trust my life to that girl. What a grip she gave me! What strength! What fidelity was in it! My hand was never *grasped* before. I think we are safe for a few days more."

Lusignan sighed. "What does it all come to? We are pulling the trigger gently, that is all."

"No, no; that is not it. Don't let us confound the matter with similes, please. Keep them for children."

Mrs. Staines left her bed; and would have left her room, but Dr. Philip forbade it strictly.

One day, seated in her arm-chair, she said to the nurse, before Dr. Philip, "Nurse, why do the servants look so curiously at me?"

Mrs. Briscoe cast a hasty glance at Dr. Philip, and then said, "I don't know, madam. I never noticed that."

"Uncle, why did nurse look at you before she answered such a simple question?"

"I don't know. What question?"

"About the servants."

"Oh, about the servants!" said he contemptuously.

"You should not turn up your nose at them, for they are all most kind and attentive. Only, I catch them looking at me so strangely; really — as if they —"

"Rosa, you are taking me quite out of my depth. The looks of servant girls! Why, of course a lady in your condition is an object of especial interest to them. I dare say they are saying to one another, 'I wonder

when my turn will come!' A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind — that is a proverb, is it not?"

"To be sure. I forgot that."

She said no more; but seemed thoughtful, and not quite satisfied.

On this Dr. Philip begged the maids to go near her as little as possible. "You are not aware of it," said he, "but your looks, and your manner of speaking, rouse her attention, and she is quicker than I thought she was, and observes very subtly."

This was done; and then she complained that nobody came near her. She insisted on coming down-stairs; it was so dull.

Dr. Philip consented, if she would be content to receive no visits for a week.

She assented to that; and now passed some hours every day in the drawing-room. In her morning wrappers, so fresh and crisp, she looked lovely, and increased in health and strength every day.

Dr. Philip used to look at her, and his very flesh would creep at the thought that, ere long, he must hurl this fair creature into the dust of affliction; must, with a word, take the ruby from her lips, the rose from her cheeks, the sparkle from her glorious eyes — eyes that beamed on him with sweet affection, and a mouth that never opened, but to show some simplicity of mind, or some pretty burst of the sensitive heart.

He put off, and put off, and at last cowardice began to whisper, "Why tell her the whole truth at all? Why not take her through stages of doubt, alarm, and, after all, leave a grain of hope till her child gets so rooted in her heart that" — But conscience and good sense interrupted this temporary thought, and made him see to what a horrible life of suspense he should condemn a human creature, and live a perpetual lie, and be always at the edge of some pitfall or other.

One day, while he sat looking at her, with all these thoughts, and many more, coursing through his mind, she looked up at him, and surprised him. "Ah!" said she gravely.

"What is the matter, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing," said she cunningly.

"Uncle, dear," said she presently, "when do we go to Herne Bay?"

Now, Dr. Philip had given that up. He had got the servants at Kent Villa on his side, and he felt safer here than in any strange place: so he said, "I don't know: that all depends. There is plenty of time."

"No, uncle," said Rosa gravely. "I wish to leave this house. I can hardly breathe in it."

"What! your native air?"

"Mystery is not my native air; and this house is full of mystery. Voices whisper at my door, and the people don't come in. The maids cast strange looks at me, and hurry away. I scolded that pert girl Jane, and she answered me as meek as Moses. I catch you looking at me, with love, and something else. What is that something—? It is Pity: that is what it is. Do you think, because I am called a simpleton, that I have no eyes, nor ears, nor sense? What is this secret which you are all hiding from one person, and that is me? Ah! Christopher has not written these five weeks. Tell me the truth, for I will know it," and she started up in wild excitement.

Then Dr. Philip saw the hour was come.

He said, "My poor girl, you have read us right. I am anxious about Christopher, and all the servants know it."

"Anxious, and not tell *me;* his wife; the woman whose life is bound up in his."

"Was it for us to retard your convalescence, and set you fretting, and perhaps destroy your child? Rosa,

my darling, think what a treasure Heaven has sent you, to love and care for."

"Yes," said she, trembling, "Heaven has been good to me; I hope Heaven will always be as good to me. I don't deserve it; but then I tell God so. I am very grateful, and very penitent. I never forget that, if I had been a good wife, my husband — five weeks is a long time. Why do you tremble so? Why are you so pale — a strong man like you? CALAMITY! CALAMITY!"

Dr. Philip hung his head.

She looked at him, started wildly up, then sank back into her chair. So the stricken deer leaps, then falls. Yet even now she put on a deceitful calm, and said, "Tell me the truth. I have a right to know."

He stammered out, "There is a report of an accident at sea."

She kept silence.

"Of a passenger drowned — out of that ship. This, coupled with his silence, fills our hearts with fear."

"It is worse — you are breaking it to me — you have gone too far to stop. One word: is he alive? Oh, say he is alive!"

Philip rang the bell hard, and said in a troubled voice, "Rosa, think of your child."

"Not when my husband — Is he alive or dead?"

"It is hard to say, with such a terrible report about, and no letters," faltered the old man, his courage failing him.

"What are you afraid of? Do you think I can't die, and go to him? Alive, or dead?" and she stood before him, raging and quivering in every limb.

The nurse came in.

"Fetch her child," he cried; "God have mercy on her."

"Ah, then he is dead," said she, with stony calmness. "I drove him to sea, and he is dead."

The nurse rushed in, and held the child to her.

She would not look at it.

"Dead!"

"Yes, our poor Christie is gone — but his child is here — the image of him. Do not forget the mother. Have pity on his child and yours."

"Take it out of my sight!" she screamed. "Away with it, or I shall murder it, as I have murdered its father. My dear Christie, before all that live! I have killed him. I shall die for him. I shall go to him." She raved and tore her hair. Servants rushed in. Rosa was carried to her bed, screaming and raving, and her black hair all down on both sides, a piteous sight.

Swoon followed swoon, and that very night brain fever set in with all its sad accompaniments; a poor bereaved creature, tossing and moaning; pale, anxious, but resolute faces of the nurse and the kitchen-maid watching: on one table a pail of ice, and on another the long, thick raven hair of our poor Simpleton, lying on clean silver paper. Dr. Philip had cut it all off with his own hand, and he was now folding it up, and crying over it; for he thought to himself, "Perhaps in a few days more only this will be left of her on earth."

CHAPTER XV.

Staines fell head-foremost into the sea with a heavy plunge. Being an excellent swimmer, he struck out the moment he touched ths water, and that arrested his dive, and brought him up with a slant, shocked and panting, drenched and confused. The next moment he saw, as through a fog — his eyes being full of water — something fall from the ship. He breasted the big waves, and swam towards it: it rose on the top of a wave, and he saw it was a life-buoy. Encumbered with wet clothes, he seemed impotent in the big waves; they threw him up so high, and down so low.

Almost exhausted, he got to the life-buoy, and clutched it with a fierce grasp and a wild cry of delight. He got it over his head, and, placing his arms round the buoyant circle, stood with his breast and head out of water, gasping.

He now drew a long breath, and got his wet hair out of his eyes, already smarting with salt water, and, raising himself on the buoy, looked out for help.

He saw, to his great concern, the ship already at a distance. She seemed to have flown, and she was still drifting fast away from him.

He saw no signs of help. His heart began to turn as cold as his drenched body. A horrible fear crossed him.

But presently he saw the weather-boat filled, and fall into the water; and then a wave rolled between him and the ship, and he only saw her topmast.

The next time he rose on a mighty wave he saw the boats together astern of the vessel, but not coming his

way; and the gloom was thickening, the ship becoming indistinct, and all was doubt and horror.

A life of agony passed in a few minutes.

He rose and fell like a cork on the buoyant waves — rose and fell, and saw nothing but the ship's lights, now terribly distant.

But at last, as he rose and fell, he caught a few fitful glimpses of a smaller light rising and falling like himself. "A boat!" he cried, and raising himself as high as he could, shouted, cried, implored for help. He stretched his hands across the water. "This way! this way!"

The light kept moving, but it came no nearer. They had greatly underrated the drift. The other boat had no light.

Minutes passed of suspense, hope, doubt, dismay, terror. Those minutes seemed hours.

In the agony of suspense the quaking heart sent beads of sweat to the brow, though the body was immersed.

And the gloom deepened, and the cold waves flung him up to heaven with their giant arms, and then down again to hell: and still that light, his only hope, was several hundred yards from him.

Only for a moment at a time could his eyeballs, straining with agony, catch this will-o'-the-wisp, the boat's light. It groped the sea up and down, but came no near.

When what seemed days of agony had passed, suddenly a rocket rose in the horizon — so it seemed to him.

The lost man gave a shriek of joy; so prone are we to interpret things hopefully.

Misery! The next time he saw that little light, that solitary spark of hope, it was not quite so near as before. A mortal sickness fell on his heart. The ship had recalled the boats by rocket.

He shrieked, he cried, he screamed, he raved. "Oh, Rosa! Rosa! for her sake, men, men, do not leave me. I am here! here!"

In vain. The miserable man saw the boat's little light retire, recede, and melt into the ship's larger light, and that light glided away.

Then, a cold, deadly stupor fell on him. Then, death's icy claw seized his heart, and seemed to run from it to every part of him. He was a dead man. Only a question of time. Nothing to gain by floating.

But the despairing mind could not quit the world in peace, and even here in the cold, cruel sea, the quivering body clung to this fragment of life, and winced at death's touch, though more merciful.

He despised this weakness; he raged at it; he could not overcome it.

Unable to live or to die, condemned to float slowly, hour by hour, down into death's jaws.

To a long, death-like stupor succeeded frenzy. Fury seized this great and long-suffering mind. It rose against the cruelty and injustice of his fate. He cursed the world, whose stupidity had driven him to sea; he cursed remorseless nature; and at last he railed on the God who made him, and made the cruel water, that was waiting for his body. "God's justice! God's mercy! God's power! they are all lies," he shouted, "dreams, chimeras, like Him the all-powerful and good, men babble of by the fire. If there was a God more powerful than the sea, and only half as good as men are, he would pity my poor Rosa and me, and send a hurricane to drive those caitiffs back to the wretch they have abandoned. Nature alone is mighty. Oh, if I could have her on my side, and only God against me! But she is as deaf to prayer as He is: as mechanical and remorseless. I am a bubble melting into the sea. Soul I have none; my

body will soon be nothing, nothing. So ends an honest, loving life. I always tried to love my fellow-creatures. Curse them! curse them! Curse the earth! Curse the sea! Curse all nature: there is no other God for me to curse."

The moon came out.

He raised his head and staring eyeballs, and cursed her.

The wind began to whistle, and flung spray in his face.

He raised his fallen head and staring eyeballs, and cursed the wind.

While he was thus raving, he became sensible of a black object to windward.

It looked like a rail, and a man leaning on it.

He stared, he cleared the wet hair from his eyes, and stared again.

The thing, being larger than himself and partly out of water, was drifting to leeward faster than himself.

He stared and trembled, and at last it came nearly abreast, black, black.

He gave a loud cry, and tried to swim towards it; but encumbered with his life-buoy, he made little progress. The thing drifted abreast of him, but ten yards distant.

As they each rose high upon the waves, he saw it plainly.

It was the very raft that had been the innocent cause of his sad fate.

He shouted with hope, he swam, he struggled; he got near it, but not to it; it drifted past, and he lost his chance of intercepting it. He struggled after it. The life-buoy would not let him catch it.

Then he gave a cry of agony, rage, despair, and flung off the life-buoy, and risked all on this one chance.

He gains a little on the raft.

He loses.

He gains: he cries, "Rosa! Rosa!" and struggles with all his soul, as well as his body: he gains.

But when almost within reach, a wave half drowns him, and he loses.

He cries, "Rosa! Rosa!" and swims high and strong. "Rosa! Rosa! Rosa!"

He is near it. He cries, "Rosa! Rosa!" and with all the energy of love and life flings himself almost out of the water, and catches hold of the nearest thing on the raft.

It was the dead man's leg.

It seemed as if it would come away in his grasp. He dared not try to pull himself up by that. But he held on by it, panting, exhausting, faint.

This faintness terrified him. "Oh," thought he, "if I faint now, all is over."

Holding by that terrible and strange support, he made a grasp, and caught hold of the woodwork at the bottom of the rail. He tried to draw himself up. Impossible.

He was no better off than with his life-buoy.

But in situations so dreadful, men think fast; he worked gradually round the bottom of the raft by his hands, till he got to leeward, still holding on. There he found a solid block of wood at the edge of the raft. He prised himself carefully up; the raft in that part then sank a little: he got his knee upon the timber of the raft, and with a wild cry seized the nearest upright, and threw both arms round it and clung tight. Then first he found breath to speak. "THANK GOD!" he cried, kneeling on the timber, and grasping the upright post — "OH, THANK GOD! THANK GOD!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"THANK God!" why, according to his theory, it should have been "Thank Nature." But I observe that, in such cases, even philosophers are ungrateful to the mistress they worship.

Our philosopher not only thanked God, but being on his knees, prayed forgiveness for his late ravings, prayed hard, with one arm curled round the upright, lest the sea, which ever and anon rushed over the bottom of the raft, should swallow him up in a moment.

Then he rose carefully, and wedged himself into the corner of the raft opposite to that other figure, ominous relic of the wild voyage the new-comer had entered upon; he put both arms over the rail, and stood erect.

The moon was now up; but so was the breeze: fleecy clouds flew with vast rapidity across her bright face, and it was by fitful though vivid glances Staines examined the raft and his companion.

The raft was large, and well made of timbers tied and nailed together, and a strong rail ran round it resting on several uprights. There were also some blocks of a very light wood screwed to the horizontal timbers, and these made it float high.

But what arrested and fascinated the man's gaze was his dead companion, sole survivor, doubtless, of a horrible voyage, since the raft was not made for one, nor by one.

It was a skeleton, or nearly, whose clothes the sea-birds had torn, and pecked every limb in all the fleshy parts; the rest of the body had dried to dark leather on

the bones. The head was little more than an eyeless skull; but in the fitful moonlight, those huge hollow caverns seemed gigantic lamp-like eyes, and glared at him fiendishly, appallingly.

He sickened at the sight. He tried not to look at it; but it would be looked at, and threaten him in the moonlight, with great lack-lustre eyes.

The wind whistled, and lashed his face with spray torn off the big waves, and the water was nearly up to his knees, and the raft tossed so wildly, it was all he could do to hold on in his corner: in which struggle, still those monstrous lack-lustre eyes, like lamps of death, glared at him in the moon; all else was dark, except the fiery crests of the black mountain-billows, tumbling and raging all around.

What a night!

But, before morning, the breeze sank, the moon set, and a sombre quiet succeeded, with only that grim figure in outline dimly visible. Owing to the motion still retained by the waves, it seemed to nod and rear, and be ever preparing to rush upon him.

The sun rose glorious, on a lovely scene; the sky was a very mosaic of colors sweet and vivid, and the tranquil, rippling sea, peach-colored to the horizon, with lines of diamonds where the myriad ripples broke into smiles.

Staines was asleep, exhausted. Soon the light awoke him, and he looked up. What an incongruous picture met his eye: that heaven of color all above and around, and right before him, like a devil stuck in mid-heaven, that grinning corpse, whose fate foreshadowed his own.

But daylight is a great strengthener of the nerves; the figure no longer appalled him — a man who had long learned to look with Science's calm eye upon the dead. When the sea became like glass, and from peach-color deepened to rose, he walked along the raft, and inspected

the dead man. He found it was a man of color, but not a black. The body was not kept in its place, as he had supposed, merely by being jammed into the angle caused by the rail; it was also lashed to the corner upright by a long, stout belt. Staines concluded this had kept the body there, and its companions had been swept away.

This was not lost on him: he removed the belt for his own use: he then found it was not only a belt, but a receptacle; it was nearly full of small, hard substances that felt like stones.

When he had taken it off the body, he felt a compunction. "Ought he to rob the dead, and expose it to be swept into the sea at the first wave, like a dead dog?"

He was about to replace the belt, when a middle course occurred to him. He was a man who always carried certain useful little things about him, viz., needles, thread, scissors, and string. He took a piece of string, and easily secured this poor light skeleton to the raft. The belt he strapped to the rail, and kept for his own need.

And now hunger gnawed him. No food was near. There was nothing but the lovely sea and sky, mosaic with color, and that grim, ominous skeleton.

Hunger comes and goes many times before it becomes insupportable. All that day and night, and the next day, he suffered its pangs; and then it became torture, but the thirst maddening.

Towards night fell a gentle rain. He spread a handkerchief and caught it. He sucked the handkerchief.

This revived him, and even allayed in some degree the pangs of hunger.

Next day was cloudless. A hot sun glared on his unprotected head, and battered down his enfeebled frame.

He resisted as well as he could. He often dipped his head, and as often the persistent sun, with cruel glare, made it smoke again.

Next day the same: but the strength to meet it was waning. He lay down and thought of Rosa, and wept bitterly. He took the dead man's belt, and lashed himself to the upright. That act, and his tears for his beloved, were almost his last acts of perfect reason: for next day came the delusions and the dreams that succeed when hunger ceases to torture, and the vital powers begin to ebb. He lay and saw pleasant meadows with meandering streams, and clusters of rich fruit that courted the hand and melted in the mouth.

Ever and anon they vanished, and he saw grim death looking down on him with those big cavernous eyes.

By and by, whether his body's eye saw the grim skeleton, or his mind's eye the juicy fruits, green meadows, and pearly brooks, all was shadowy.

So, in a placid calm, beneath a blue sky, the raft drifted dead, with its dead freight, upon the glassy purple, and he drifted, too, towards the world unknown.

There came across the waters to that dismal raft a thing none too common, by sea or land — a good man.

He was tall, stalwart, bronzed, and had hair like snow, before his time, for he had known trouble. He commanded a merchant steamer, bound for Calcutta, on the old route.

The man at the mast-head descried a floating wreck, and hailed the deck accordingly. The captain altered his course without one moment's hesitation, and brought up alongside, lowered a boat, and brought the dead, and the breathing man, on board.

A young middy lifted Staines in his arms from the wreck to the boat; he whose person I described in chapter one weighed now no more than that.

Men are not always rougher than women. Their strength and nerve enable them now and then to be gentler than buttery-fingered angels, who drop frail

things through sensitive agitation, and break them. These rough men saw Staines was hovering between life and death, and they handled him like a thing the ebbing life might be shaken out of in a moment. It was pretty to see how gingerly the sailors carried the sinking man up the ladder, and one fetched swabs, and the others laid him down softly on them at their captain's feet.

"Well done, men," said he. "Poor fellow! Pray Heaven, we may not have come too late. Now stand aloof a bit. Send the surgeon aft."

The surgeon came, and looked, and felt the heart. He shook his head, and called for brandy. He had Staines's head raised, and got half a spoonful of diluted brandy down his throat. But there was an ominous gurgling.

After several such attempts at intervals, he said plainly the man's life could not be saved by ordinary means.

"Then try extraordinary," said the captain. "My orders are that he is to be saved. There is life in him. You have only got to keep it there. He *must* be saved; he *shall* be saved."

"I should like to try Dr. Staines's remedy," said the surgeon.

"Try it, then: what is it?"

"A bath of beef-tea. Dr. Staines says he applied it to a starved child — in the *Lancet*."

"Take a hundred-weight of beef, and boil it in the coppers."

Thus encouraged, the surgeon went to the cook, and very soon beef was steaming on a scale and at a rate unparalleled.

Meantime, Captain Dodd had the patient taken to his own cabin, and he and his servant administered weak brandy and water with great caution and skill.

There was no perceptible result. But at all events

there was life and vital instinct left, or he could not have swallowed.

Thus they hovered about him for some hours, and then the bath was ready.

The captain took charge of the patient's clothes: the surgeon and a sailor bathed him in lukewarm beef-tea, and then covered him very warm with blankets next the skin. Guess how near a thing it seemed to them, when I tell you they dared not rub him.

Just before sunset his pulse became perceptible. The surgeon administered half a spoonful of egg-flip. The patient swallowed it.

By and by he sighed.

"He must not be left, day or night," said the captain. "I don't know who or what he is, but he is a man; and I could not bear him to die now."

That night Captain Dodd overhauled the patient's clothes, and looked for marks on his linen. There were none.

"Poor devil!" said Captain Dodd. "He is a bachelor."

Captain Dodd found his pocket-book, with bank-notes, two hundred pounds. He took the numbers, made a memorandum of them, and locked the notes up.

He lighted his lamp, examined the belt, unripped it, and poured out the contents on his table.

They were dazzling. A great many large pieces of amethyst, and some of white topaz and rock crystal; a large number of smaller stones, carbuncles, chrysolites, and not a few emeralds. Dodd looked at them with pleasure, sparkling in the lamplight.

"What a lot!" said he. "I wonder what they are worth!" He sent for the first mate, who, he knew, did a little private business in precious stones. "Masterton," said he, "oblige me by counting these stones with me, and valuing them."

Mr. Masterton stared, and his mouth watered. However, he named the various stones and valued them. He said there was one stone, a large emerald, without a flaw, that was worth a heavy sum by itself; and the pearls, very fine: and looking at the great number, they must be worth a thousand pounds.

Captain Dodd then entered the whole business carefully in the ship's log: the living man he described thus: "About five feet six in height, and about fifty years of age." Then he described the notes and the stones very exactly, and made Masterton, the valuer, sign the log.

Staines took a good deal of egg-flip that night, and next day ate solid food; but they questioned him in vain; his reason was entirely in abeyance: he had become an eater, and nothing else. Whenever they gave him food, he showed a sort of fawning animal gratitude. Other sentiment he had none, nor did words enter his mind any more than a bird's. And since it is not pleasant to dwell on the wreck of a fine understanding, I will only say that they landed him at Cape Town, out of bodily danger, but weak, and his mind, to all appearance, a hopeless blank.

They buried the skeleton,—read the service of the English Church over a Malabar heathen.

Dodd took Staines to the hospital, and left twenty pounds with the governor of it to cure him. But he deposited Staines's money and jewels with a friendly banker, and begged that the principal cashier might see the man, and be able to recognize him, should he apply for his own.

The cashier came and examined him, and also the ruby ring on his finger — a parting gift from Rosa — and remarked this was a new way of doing business.

"Why, it is the only one, sir," said Dodd. "How can

we give you his signature? He is not in his right mind."

"Nor never will be."

"Don't say that, sir. Let us hope for the best, poor fellow."

Having made these provisions, the worthy captain weighed anchor, with a warm heart and a good conscience. Yet the image of the man he had saved pursued him, and he resolved to look after him next time he should coal at Cape Town, homeward bound.

Staines recovered his strength in about two months; but his mind returned in fragments, and very slowly. For a long, long time he remembered nothing that had preceded his great calamity. His mind started afresh, aided only by certain fixed habits; for instance, he could read and write: but, strange as it may appear, he had no idea who he was; and when his memory cleared a little on that head, he thought his surname was Christie, but he was not sure.

Nevertheless, the presiding physician discovered in him a certain progress of intelligence, which gave him great hopes. In the fifth month, having shown a marked interest in the other sick patients, coupled with a disposition to be careful and attentive, they made him a nurse, or rather a sub-nurse under the special orders of a responsible nurse. I really believe it was done at first to avoid the alternative of sending him adrift, or transferring him to the insane ward of the hospital. In this congenial pursuit he showed such watchfulness and skill, that by and by they found they had got a treasure. Two months after that he began to talk about medicine, and astonished them still more. He became the puzzle of the establishment. The doctor and surgeon would converse with him, and try and lead him to his past life; but when it came to that, he used to put his hands to

his head with a face of great distress, and it was clear some impassable barrier lay between his growing intelligence and the past events of his life. Indeed, on one occasion, he said to his kind friend the doctor, "The past!—a black wall! a black wall!"

Ten months after his admission he was promoted to be an attendant, with a salary.

He put by every shilling of it; for he said, "A voice from the dark past tells me money is everything in this world."

A discussion was held by the authorities as to whether he should be informed he had money and jewels at the bank or not.

Upon the whole, it was thought advisable to postpone this information, lest he should throw it away; but they told him he had been picked up at sea, and both money and jewels found on him; they were in safe hands, only the person was away for the time. Still, he was not to look upon himself as either friendless or moneyless.

At this communication he showed an almost childish delight, that confirmed the doctor in his opinion he was acting prudently, and for the real benefit of an amiable and afflicted person, not yet to be trusted with money and jewels.

CHAPTER XVII.

In his quality of attendant on the sick, Staines sometimes conducted a weak but convalescent patient into the open air; and he was always pleased to do this, for the air of the Cape carries health and vigor on its wings. He had seen its fine recreative properties, and he divined, somehow, that the minds of convalescents ought to be amused, and so he often begged the doctor to let him take a convalescent abroad. Sooner than not, he would draw the patient several miles in a Bath chair. He rather liked this; for he was a Hercules, and had no egotism or false pride where the sick were concerned.

Now, these open-air walks exerted a beneficial influence on his own darkened mind. It is one thing to struggle from idea to idea; it is another when material objects mingle with the retrospect; they seem to supply stepping-stones in the gradual resuscitation of memory and reason.

The ships going out of port were such a stepping-stone to him, and a vague consciousness came back to him of having been in a ship.

Unfortunately, along with this reminiscence came a desire to go in one again; and this sowed discontent in his mind, and the more that mind enlarged, the more he began to dislike the hospital and its confinement. The feeling grew, and bade fair to disqualify him for his humble office. The authorities could not fail to hear of this, and they had a little discussion about parting with him; but they hesitated to turn him adrift, and they still doubted the propriety of trusting him with money and jewels.

While matters were in this state a remarkable event occurred. He drew a sick patient down to the quay one morning, and watched the business of the port with the keenest interest. A ship at anchor was unloading, and a great heavy boat was sticking to her side like a black leech. Presently this boat came away, and moved sluggishly towards the shore, rather by help of the tide than of the two men who went through the form of propelling her with two monstrous sweeps, while a third steered her. She contained English goods: agricultural implements, some cases, four horses, and a buxom young woman with a thorough English face. The woman seemed a little excited, and as she neared the landing-place, she called out in jocund tones to a young man on the shore, "It is all right, Dick; they are beauties," and she patted the beasts as people do who are fond of them.

She stepped lightly ashore, and then came the slower work of landing her imports. She bustled about, like a hen over her brood, and wasn't always talking, but put in her word every now and then, never crossly, and always to the point.

Staines listened to her, and examined her with a sort of puzzled look; but she took no notice of him; her whole soul was in the cattle.

They got the things on board well enough; but the horses were frightened at the gangway, and jibbed. Then a man was for driving them, and poked one of them in the quarter; he snorted and reared directly.

"Man alive!" cried the young woman, "that is not the way. They are docile enough, but frightened. Encourage 'em, and let 'em look at it. Give 'em time. More haste less speed, with timorous cattle."

"That is a very pleasant voice," said poor Staines, rather more dictatorially than became the present state of his intellect. He added softly, "a true woman's

voice;" then gloomily, "a voice of the past — the dark, dark past."

At this speech intruding itself upon the short sentences of business, there was a roar of laughter, and Phœbe Falcon turned sharply round to look at the speaker. She stared at him; she cried "Oh!" and clasped her hands, and colored all over. "Why, sure," said she, "I can't be mistook. Those eyes — 'tis you, doctor, isn't it?"

"Doctor?" said Staines, with a puzzled look. "Yes; I think they called me doctor once. I'm an attendant in the hospital now."

"Dick!" cried Phœbe, in no little agitation. "Come here this minute."

"What, afore I get the horses ashore?"

"Ay, before you do another thing, or say another word. Come here, now." So he came, and she told him to take a good look at the man. "Now," said she, "who is that?"

"Blest if I know," said he.

"What, not know the man who saved your own life! Oh, Dick, what are your eyes worth?"

This discourse brought the few persons within hearing into one band of excited starers.

Dick took a good look, and said, "I'm blest if I don't, though; it is the doctor that cut my throat."

This strange statement drew forth quite a shout of ejaculations.

"Oh, better breathe through a slit than not at all," said Dick. "Saved my life with that cut, he did, didn't he, Pheeb?"

"That he did, Dick. Dear heart, I hardly know whether I am in my senses or not, seeing him a-looking so blank. You try him."

Dick came forward. "Sure you remember me, sir. Dick Dale. You cut my throat, and saved my life."

"Cut your throat! why, that would kill you."

"Not the way you done it. Well, sir, you ain't the man you was, that is clear; but you was a good friend to me, and there's my hand."

"Thank you, Dick," said Staines, and took his hand. "I don't remember *you*. Perhaps you are one of the past. The past is dead wall to me — a dark dead wall," and he put his hands to his head with a look of distress.

Everybody there now suspected the truth, and some pointed mysteriously to their own heads.

Phœbe whispered an inquiry to the sick person.

He said a little pettishly, "All I know is, he is the kindest attendant in the ward, and very attentive."

"Oh, then, he is in the public hospital."

"Of course he is."

The invalid, with the selfishness of his class, then begged Staines to take him out of all this bustle down to the beach. Staines complied at once, with the utmost meekness, and said, "Good-by, old friends; forgive me for not remembering you. It is my great affliction that the past is gone from me — gone, gone." And he went sadly away, drawing his sick charge like a patient mule.

Phœbe Falcon looked after him, and began to cry.

"Nay, nay, Phœbe," said Dick; "don't ye take on about it."

"I wonder at you," sobbed Phœbe. "Good people, I'm fonder of my brother than he is of himself, it seems; for I can't take it so easy. Well, the world is full of trouble. Let us do what we are here for. But I shall pray for the poor soul every night, that his mind may be given back to him."

So then she bustled, and gave herself to getting the cattle on shore, and the things put on board her wagon.

But when this was done, she said to her brother, "Dick, I did not think anything on earth could take my heart off the cattle and the things we have got from

home; but I can't leave this without going to the hospital about our poor dear doctor: and it is late for making a start, any way — and you mustn't forget the newspapers for Reginald — he is so fond of them — and you must contrive to have one sent out regular after this, and I'll go to the hospital."

She went, and saw the head doctor, and told him he had got an attendant there she had known in England in a very different condition, and she had come to see if there was anything she could do for him — for she felt very grateful to him, and grieved to see him so.

The doctor was pleased and surprised, and put several questions.

Then she gave him a clear statement of what he had done for Dick in England.

"Well," said the doctor, "I believe it is the same man; for, now you tell me this — yes, one of the nurses told me he knew more about medicine than she did. His name, if you please."

"His name, sir?"

"Yes, his name. Of course you know his name. Is it Christie?"

"Doctor," said Phœbe, blushing, "I don't know what you will think of me, but I don't know his name. Laws forgive me, I never had the sense to ask it."

A shade of suspicion crossed the doctor's face.

Phœbe saw it, and colored to the temples. "Oh, sir," she cried piteously, "don't go for to think I have told you a lie! why should I? and indeed I am not of that sort, nor Dick neither. Sir, I'll bring him to you, and he will say the same. Well, we were all in terror and confusion, and I met him accidentally in the street. He was only a customer till then, and paid ready money, so that is how I never knew his name, but if I hadn't been the greatest fool in England, I should have asked his wife."

"What! he has a wife?"

"Ay, sir, the loveliest lady you ever clapped eyes on, and he is almost as handsome; has eyes in his head like jewels; 'twas by them I knew him on the quay, and I think he knew my voice again, said as good as he had heard it in past times."

"Did he? Then we have got him," cried the doctor energetically.

"La, sir."

"Yes; if he knows your voice, you will be able in time to lead his memory back; at least, I think so. Do you live in Cape Town?"

"Dear heart, no. I live at my own farm, a hundred and eighty miles from this."

"What a pity!"

"Why, sir?"

"Well — hum!"

"Oh, if you think I could do the poor doctor good by having him with me, you have only to say the word, and out he goes with Dick and me to-morrow morning. We should have started for home to-night, but for this."

"Are you in earnest, madam?" said the doctor, opening his eyes. "Would you really encumber yourself with a person whose reason is in suspense, and may never return?"

"But that is not his fault, sir. Why, if a dog had saved my brother's life, I'd take it home, and keep it all its days; and this is a man, and a worthy man. Oh, sir, when I saw him brought down so, and his beautiful eyes clouded like, my very bosom yearned over the poor soul; a kind act done in dear old England, who can see the man in trouble here, and not repay it — ay, if it cost one's blood. But indeed he is strong and healthy, and hands are always scarce our way, and the odds are he will earn his meat one way or t'other; and if he

doesn't, why, all the better for me; I shall have the pleasure of serving him for nought that once served me for neither money nor reward."

"You are a good woman," said the doctor warmly.

"There's better, and there's worse," said Phœbe quietly, and even a little coldly.

"More of the latter," said the doctor dryly. "Well, Mrs. ——?"

"Falcon, sir."

"We shall hand him over to your care: but first — just for form — if you are a married woman, we should like to see Dick here: he is your husband, I presume."

Phœbe laughed merrily. "Dick is my brother; and he can't be spared to come here. Dick! he'd say black was white if I told him to."

"Then let us see your husband about it — just for form."

"My husband is at the farm. I could not venture so far away, and not leave him in charge." If she had said, "I will not bring him into temptation," that would have been nearer the truth. "Let that fly stick on the wall, sir. What I do, my husband will approve."

"I see how it is. You rule the roost."

Phœbe did not reply point-blank to that; she merely said, "All my chickens are happy, great and small," and an expression of lofty, womanly, innocent pride illuminated her face and made it superb for a moment.

In short, it was settled that Staines should accompany her next morning to Dale's Kloof Farm, if he chose. On inquiry, it appeared that he had just returned to the hospital with his patient. He was sent for, and Phœbe asked him sweetly if he would go with her to her house, one hundred and eighty miles away, and she would be kind to him.

"On the water?"

"Nay, by land; but 'tis a fine country, and you will see beautiful deer and things running across the plains, and" —

"Shall I find the past again, the past again?"

"Ay, poor soul, that we shall, God willing. You and I, we will hunt it together."

He looked at her, and gave her his hand. "I will go with you. Your face belongs to the past, so does your voice."

He then inquired, rather abruptly, had she any children. She smiled.

"Ay, that I have, the loveliest little boy you ever saw. When you are as you used to be, you will be his doctor, won't you?"

"Yes, I will nurse him, and you will help me find the past."

Phœbe then begged Staines to be ready to start at six in the morning. She and Dick would take him up on their way.

While she was talking to him the doctor slipped out, and to tell the truth he went to consult with another authority, whether he should take this opportunity of telling Staines that he had money and jewels at the bank: he himself was half inclined to do so; but the other, who had not seen Phœbe's face, advised him to do nothing of the kind. "They are always short of money, these colonial farmers," said he; "she would get every shilling out of him."

"Most would; but this is such an honest face."

"Well, but she is a mother, you say."

"Yes."

"Well, what mother could be just to a lunatic, with her own sweet angel babes to provide for?"

"That is true," said Dr. ——. "Maternal love is apt to modify the conscience."

"What I would do, — I would take her address, and make her promise to write if he gets well, and if he does get well then write to *him*, and tell him all about it."

Dr. —— acted on this shrewd advice, and ordered a bundle to be made up for the traveller out of the hospital stores: it contained a nice light summer suit and two changes of linen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Next morning, Staines and Dick Dale walked through the streets of Cape Town side by side. Dick felt the uneasiness of a sane man, not familiar with the mentally afflicted, who suddenly finds himself alone with one. Insanity turns men oftenest into sheep and hares; but it does now and then make them wolves and tigers; and that has saddled the insane in general with a character for ferocity. Young Dale, then, cast many a suspicious glance at his comrade, as he took him along. These glances were reassuring: Christopher's face had no longer the mobility, the expressive changes, that mark the superior mind; his countenance was monotonous: but the one expression was engaging; there was a sweet, patient, lamb-like look: the glorious eye a little troubled and perplexed, but wonderfully mild. Dick Dale looked and looked, and his uneasiness vanished. And the more he looked, the more did a certain wonder creep over him, and make him scarce believe the thing he knew; viz., that a learned doctor had saved him from the jaws of death by rare knowledge, sagacity, courage, and skill combined: and that mighty man of wisdom was brought down to this lamb, and would go north, south, east, or west, with sweet and perfect submission, even as he, Dick Dale, should appoint. With these reflections honest Dick felt his eyes get a little misty, and, to use those words of Scripture, which nothing can surpass or equal, his bowels yearned over the man.

As for Christopher, he looked straight forward, and said not a word till they cleared the town; but when he

saw the vast flowery vale, and the far-off violet hills, like Scotland glorified, he turned to Dick with an ineffable expression of sweetness and good fellowship, and said, "Oh, beautiful! We'll hunt the past together."

"We — will — *so*," said Dick, with a sturdy and indeed almost a stern resolution.

Now, this he said, not that he cared for the past, nor intended to waste the present by going upon its predecessor's trail; but he had come to a resolution — full three minutes ago — to humor his companion to the top of his bent, and say "Yes" with hypocritical vigor to everything not directly and immediately destructive to him and his.

The next moment they turned a corner and came upon the rest of their party, hitherto hidden by the apricot hedge and a turning in the road. A blue-black Kafir, with two yellow Hottentot drivers, man and boy, was harnessing, in the most primitive mode, four horses on to the six oxen attached to the wagon; and the horses were flattening their ears, and otherwise resenting the incongruity. Meantime a fourth figure, a colossal young Kafir woman, looked on superior with folded arms, like a sable Juno looking down with that absolute composure upon the struggles of man and other animals, which Lucretius and his master Epicurus assigned to the Divine nature. Without jesting, the grandeur, majesty, and repose of this figure were unsurpassable in nature, and such as have vanished from sculpture two thousand years and more.

Dick Dale joined the group immediately, and soon arranged the matter. Meantime, Phœbe descended from the wagon, and welcomed Christopher very kindly, and asked him if he would like to sit beside her, or to walk.

He glanced into the wagon; it was covered and cur-

tained, and dark as a cupboard. "I think," said he, timidly, "I shall see more of the past out here."

"So you will, poor soul," said Phœbe kindly, "and better for your health: but you must not go far from the wagon, for I'm a fidget; and I have got the care of you now, you know, for want of a better. Come, Ucatella; you must ride with me, and help me sort the things; they are all higgledy-piggledy." So those two got into the wagon through the back curtains. Then the Kafir driver flourished his kambok, or long whip, in the air, and made it crack like a pistol, and the horses reared, and the oxen started and slowly bored in between them, for they whinnied, and kicked, and spread out like a fan all over the road; but a flick or two from the terrible kambok soon sent them bleeding and trembling and rubbing shoulders, and the oxen, mildly but persistently goring their recalcitrating haunches, the intelligent animals went ahead, and revenged themselves by breaking the harness. But that goes for little in Cape travel.

The body of the wagon was long and low and very stout. The tilt strong and tight-made. The roof inside, and most of the sides, lined with green baize. Curtains of the same to the little window and the back. There was a sort of hold literally built full of purchases; a small fireproof safe; huge blocks of salt; saws, axes, pick-axes, adzes, flails, tools innumerable, bales of wool and linen stuff, hams, and two hundred empty sacks strewn over all. In large pigeon-holes fixed to the sides were light goods, groceries, collars, glaring cotton handkerchiefs for Phœbe's aboriginal domestics, since not every year did she go to Cape Town, a twenty days' journey by wagon: things dangled from the very roof; but no hard goods there, if you please, to batter one's head in a spill. Outside were latticed grooves with tent, tent-poles,

and rifles. Great pieces of cork, and bags of hay and corn, hung dangling from mighty hooks — the latter to feed the cattle, should they be compelled to camp out on some sterile spot on the Veldt, and methinks to act as buffers, should the whole concern roll down a nullah or little precipice, no very uncommon incident in the blessed region they must pass to reach Dale's Kloof.

Harness mended; fresh start. The Hottentots and Kafir vociferated and yelled, and made the unearthly row of a dozen wild beasts wrangling: the horses drew the bullocks, they the wagon; it crawled and creaked, and its appendages wobbled finely.

Slowly they creaked and wobbled past apricot hedges and detached houses and huts, and got into an open country without a tree, but here and there a stunted camel-thorn. The soil was arid, and grew little food for man or beast; yet, by a singular freak of nature, it put forth abundantly things that here at home we find it harder to raise than homely grass and oats; the ground was thickly clad with flowers of delightful hues; pyramids of snow or rose-color bordered the track; yellow and crimson stars bejewelled the ground, and a thousand bulbous plants burst into all imaginable colors, and spread a rainbow carpet to the foot of the violet hills; and all this glowed, and gleamed, and glittered in a sun shining with incredible brightness and purity of light, but, somehow, without giving a headache or making the air sultry.

Christopher fell to gathering flowers, and interrogating the past by means of them; for he had studied botany: the past gave him back some pitiably vague ideas. He sighed. "Never mind," said he to Dick, and tapped his forehead: "it is here: it is only locked up."

"All right," said Dick; "nothing is lost when you know where 'tis."

"This is a beautiful country," suggested Christopher. "It is all flowers. It is like the garden of — the garden of — locked up."

"It is de—light—ful," replied the self-compelled optimist sturdily. But here nature gave way; he was obliged to relieve his agricultural bile by getting into the cart and complaining to his sister. "'Twill take us all our time to cure him. He have been bepraising this here soil, which it is only fit to clean the women's kettles. 'Twouldn't feed three larks to an acre, I know; no, *nor half so many.*"

"Poor soul! mayhap the flowers have took his eye. Sit here a bit, Dick. I want to talk to you about a many things."

While these two were conversing, Ucatella, who was very fond of Phœbe, but abhorred wagons, stepped out and stalked by the side, like an ostrich, a camelopard, or a Taglioni; nor did the effort with which she subdued her stride to the pace of the procession appear: it was the poetry of walking. Christopher admired it a moment; but the noble expanse tempted him, and he strode forth like a giant, his lungs inflating in the glorious air, and soon left the wagon far behind.

The consequence was that when they came to a halt, and Dick and Phœbe got out to release and water the cattle, there was Christopher's figure retiring into space.

"Hanc rem ægrè tulit Phœbe," as my old friend Livy would say. "Oh dear! oh dear! if he strays so far from us, he will be eaten up at nightfall by jackals, or lions, or something. One of you must go after him."

"Me go, missy," said Ucatella zealously, pleased with an excuse for stretching her magnificent limbs.

"Ay, but mayhap he will not come back with *you:* will he, Dick?"

"That he will, like a lamb." Dick wanted to look after the cattle.

"Yuke, my girl," said Phœbe, "listen. He has been a good friend of ours in trouble; and now he is not quite right *here*. So be very kind to him, but be sure and bring him back, or keep him till we come."

"Me bring him back alive, certain sure," said Ucatella, smiling from ear to ear. She started with a sudden glide, like a boat taking the water, and appeared almost to saunter away, so easy was the motion; but when you looked at the ground she was covering, the stride, or glide, or whatever it was, was amazing.

"She seem'd in walking to devour the way."

Christopher walked fast, but nothing like this; and as he stopped at times to botanize and gaze at the violet hills, and interrogate the past, she came up with him about five miles from the halting-place.

She laid her hand quietly on his shoulder, and said, with a broad genial smile, and a musical chuckle, "Ucatella come for you. Missy want to speak you."

"Oh! very well;" and he turned back with her, directly; but she took him by the hand to make sure; and they marched back peaceably, in silence, and hand in hand. But he looked and looked at her, and at last he stopped dead short, and said, a little arrogantly, "Come, I know *you*. *You* are not locked up;" and he inspected her point-blank. She stood like an antique statue, and faced the examination. "You are 'the noble savage,'" said he, having concluded his inspection.

"Nay," said she. "I be the housemaid."

"The housemaid?"

"Iss, the housemaid, Ucatella. So come on." And she drew him along, sore perplexed.

They met the cavalcade a mile from the halting-place, and Phœbe apologized a little to Christopher. "I hope you'll excuse me, sir," said she, "but I am just for all the world like a hen with her chickens; if but one strays, I'm all in a flutter till I get him back."

"Madam," said Christopher, "I am very unhappy at the way things are locked up. Please tell me truly, is this 'the housemaid,' or 'the noble savage'?"

"Well, she is both, if you go to that, and the best creature ever breathed."

"Then she *is* 'the noble savage'?"

"Ay, so they call her, because she is black."

"Then, thank Heaven," said Christopher, "the past is not all locked up."

That afternoon they stopped at an inn. But Dick slept in the cart. At three in the morning they took the road again, and creaked along supernaturally loud under a purple firmament studded with huge stars, all bright as moons, that lit the way quite clear, and showed black things innumerable flitting to and fro; these made Phœbe shudder, but were no doubt harmless; still Dick carried his double rifle, and a revolver in his belt.

They made a fine march in the cool, until some slight mists gathered, and then they halted and breakfasted near a silvery kloof, and watered the cattle. While thus employed, suddenly a golden tinge seemed to fall like a lash on the vapors of night; they scudded away directly, as jackals before the lion; the stars paled, and with one incredible bound, the mighty sun leaped into the horizon, and rose into the sky. In a moment all the lesser lamps of heaven were out, though late so glorious, and there was nothing but one vast vaulted turquoise, and a great flaming topaz mounting with eternal ardor to its centre.

This did not escape Christopher. "What is this?"

said he. "No twilight. The tropics!" He managed to dig that word out of the past in a moment.

At ten o'clock the sun was so hot that they halted, and let the oxen loose till sun-down. Then they began to climb the mountains.

The way was steep and rugged; indeed, so rough in places, that the cattle had to jump over the holes, and as the wagon could not jump so cleverly, it jolted appallingly, and many a scream issued forth.

Near the summit, when the poor beasts were dead beat, they got into clouds and storms, and the wind rushed howling at them through the narrow pass with such fury it flattened the horses' ears, and bade fair to sweep the whole cavalcade to the plains below.

Christopher and Dick walked close behind, under the lee of the wagon. Christopher said in Dick's ear, "D'ye hear that? Time to reef topsails, captain."

"It is time to do *something*," said Dick. He took advantage of a jutting rock, drew the wagon half behind it and across the road, propped the wheels with stones, and they all huddled to leeward, man and beast indiscriminately.

"Ah!" said Christopher, approvingly; "we are lying to: a very — proper — course."

They huddled and shivered three hours, and then the sun leaped into the sky, and lo! a transformation scene. The cold clouds were first rosy fleeces, then golden ones, then gold-dust, then gone; the rain was big diamonds, then crystal sparks, then gone; the rocks and the bushes sparkled with gem-like drops, and shone and smiled.

The shivering party bustled, and toasted the potent luminary in hot coffee; for Phœbe's wagon had a stove and chimney; and then they yoked their miscellaneous cattle again, and breasted the hill. With many a jump, and bump, and jolt, and scream from inside, they reached

the summit, and looked down on a vast slope, flowering but arid, a region of gaudy sterility.

The descent was more tremendous than the ascent, and Phœbe got out, and told Christopher she would liever cross the ocean twice than this dreadful mountain once.

The Hottentot with the reins was now bent like a bow all the time, keeping the cattle from flowing diverse over precipices, and the Kafir with his kambok was here, and there, and everywhere, his whip flicking like a lancet, and cracking like a horse-pistol, and the pair vied like Apollo and Pan, not which could sing sweetest, but swear loudest. Having the lofty hill for some hours between them and the sun, they bumped, and jolted, and stuck in mud-holes, and flogged and swore the cattle out of them again, till at last they got to the bottom, where ran a turbid kloof or stream. It was fordable, but the recent rains had licked away the slope; so the existing bank was two feet above the stream. Little recked the demon drivers or the parched cattle; in they plunged promiscuously, with a flop like thunder, followed by an awful splashing. The wagon stuck fast in the mud, the horses tied themselves in a knot, and rolled about in the stream, and the oxen drank imperturbably.

"Oh, the salt! the salt!" screamed Phœbe, and the rocks re-echoed her lamentations.

The wagon was inextricable, the cattle done up, the savages lazy, so they stayed for several hours. Christopher botanized, but not alone. Phœbe drew Ucatella apart, and explained to her that when a man is a little wrong in the head, it makes a child of him: "So," said she, "you must think he is your child, and never let him out of your sight."

"All right," said the sable Juno, who spoke English ridiculously well, and rapped out idioms; especially "Come on," and "All right."

About dusk, what the drivers had foreseen, though they had not the sense to explain it, took place; the kloof dwindled to a mere gutter, and the wagon stuck high and dry. Phœbe waved her handkerchief to Ucatella. Ucatella, who had dogged Christopher about four hours without a word, now took his hand, and said, "My child, missy wants us; come on;" and so led him unresistingly.

The drivers, flogging like devils, cursing like troopers, and yelling like hyenas gone mad, tried to get the wagon off; but it was fast as a rock. Then Dick and the Hottentot put their shoulders to one wheel, and tried to prise it up, while the Kafir *encouraged* the cattle with his thong. Observing this, Christopher went in, with his sable custodian at his heels, and heaved at the other embedded wheel. The wagon was lifted directly, so that the cattle tugged it out, and they got clear. On examination, the salt had just escaped.

Says Ucatella to Phœbe, a little ostentatiously, "My child is strong and useful; make little missy a good slave."

"A slave! Heaven forbid!" said Phœbe. "He'll be a father to us all, once he gets his head back; and I do think it is coming — but very slow."

The next three days offered the ordinary incidents of African travel, but nothing that operated much on Christopher's mind, which is the true point of this narrative; and as there are many admirable books of African travel, it is the more proper I should confine myself to what may be called the relevant incidents of the journey.

On the sixth day from Cape Town, they came up with a large wagon stuck in a mud-hole. There was quite a party of Boers, Hottentots, Kafirs, round it, armed with whips, shamboks, and oaths, lashing and cursing without intermission, or any good effect; and there were the

wretched beasts straining in vain at their choking yokes, moaning with anguish, trembling with terror, their poor mild eyes dilated with agony and fear, and often, when the blows of the cruel shamboks cut open their bleeding flesh, they bellowed to Heaven their miserable and vain protest against this devil's work.

Then the past opened its stores, and lent Christopher a word.

"BARBARIANS!" he roared, and seized a gigantic Kafir by the throat, just as his shambok descended for the hundredth time. There was a mighty struggle, as of two Titans; dust flew round the combatants in a cloud; a whirling of big bodies, and down they both went with an awful thud, the Saxon uppermost, by Nature's law.

The Kafir's companions, amazed at first, began to roll their eyes and draw a knife or two; but Dick ran for ward, and said, "Don't hurt him: he is wrong *here*."

This representation pacified them more readily than one might have expected. Dick added hastily, "We'll get you out of the hole *our* way, and cry quits."

The proposal was favorably received, and the next minute Christopher and Ucatella at one wheel, and Dick and the Hottentot at the other, with no other help than two pointed iron bars bought for their shepherds, had effected what sixteen oxen could not. To do this Dick Dale had bared his arm to the shoulder; it was a stalwart limb, like his sister's, and he now held it out all swollen and corded, and slapped it with his other hand. "Look'ee here, you chaps," said he: "the worst use a man can put that there to is to go cutting out a poor beast's heart for not doing more than he can. You are good fellows, you Kafirs; but I think you have sworn never to put your shoulder to a wheel. But, bless your poor silly hearts, a little strength put on at the right place is better than a deal at the wrong."

"You hear that, you Kafir chaps?" inquired Ucatella, a little arrogantly — for a Kafir.

The Kafirs, who had stood quite silent to imbibe these remarks, bowed their heads with all the dignity and politeness of Roman senators, Spanish grandees, etc.; and one of the party replied gravely, "The words of the white man are always wise."

"And his arm blanked[1] strong," said Christopher's late opponent, from whose mind, however, all resentment had vanished.

Thus spake the Kafirs; yet to this day never hath a man of all their tribe put his shoulder to a wheel, so strong is custom in South Africa; probably in all Africa; since I remember St. Augustin found it stronger than he liked, at Carthage.

Ucatella went to Phœbe, and said, "Missy, my child is good and brave."

"Bother you and your child!" said poor Phœbe. "To think of his flying at a giant like that, and you letting of him. I'm all of a tremble from head to foot:" and Phœbe relieved herself with a cry.

"Oh, missy!" said Ucatella.

"There, never mind me. Do go and look after your child, and keep him out of more mischief. I wish we were safe at Dale's Kloof, I do."

Ucatella complied, and went botanizing with Dr. Staines; but that gentleman, in the course of his scientific researches into camomile flowers and blasted heath, which were all that lovely region afforded, suddenly succumbed and stretched out his limbs, and said, sleepily, "Good-night — U—cat—" and was off into the land of Nod.

The wagon, which, by the way, had passed the larger

[1] I take this very useful expression from a delightful volume by Mr. Boyle.

but slower vehicle, found him fast asleep, and Ucatella standing by him as ordered, motionless and grand.

"Oh, dear! what now?" said Phœbe: but being a sensible woman, though in the hen and chickens line, she said, "'Tis the fighting and the excitement. 'Twill do him more good than harm, I think:" and she had him bestowed in the wagon, and never disturbed him night nor day. He slept thirty-six hours at a stretch; and when he awoke, she noticed a slight change in his eye. He looked at her with an interest he had not shown before, and said, "Madam, I know you."

"Thank God for that," said Phœbe.

"You kept a little shop, in the other world."

Phœbe opened her eyes with some little alarm.

"You understand — the world that is locked up — for the present."

"Well, sir, so I did; and sold you milk and butter. Don't you mind?"

"No — the milk and butter — they are locked up."

The country became wilder, the signs of life miserably sparse; about every twenty miles the farmhouse or hut of a degenerate Boer, whose children and slaves pigged together, and all ran jostling, and the mistress screamed in her shrill Dutch, and the Hottentots all chirped together, and confusion reigned for want of method: often they went miles, and saw nothing but a hut or two, with a nude Hottentot eating flesh, burnt a little, but not cooked, at the door; and the kloofs became deeper and more turbid, and Phœbe was in an agony about her salt, and Christopher advised her to break it in big lumps, and hang it all about the wagon in sacks; and she did, and Ucatella said profoundly, "My child is wise;" and they began to draw near home, and Phœbe to fidget; and she said to Christopher, "Oh, dear! I hope they are all alive and well: once you leave home,

you don't know what may have happened by then you come back. One comfort, I've got Sophy: she is very dependable, and no beauty, thank my stars."

That night, the last they had to travel, was cloudy, for a wonder, and they groped with lanterns.

Ucatella and her child brought up the rear. Presently there was a light pattering behind them. The swift-eared Ucatella clutched Christopher's arm, and turning round, pointed back, with eyeballs white and rolling. There were full a dozen animals following them, whose bodies seemed colorless as shadows, but their eyes little balls of flaming lime-light.

"GUN!" said Christie, and gave the Kafir's arm a pinch. She flew to the caravan; he walked backwards, facing the foe. The wagon was halted, and Dick ran back with two loaded rifles. In his haste he gave one to Christopher, and repented at leisure; but Christopher took it, and handled it like an experienced person, and said, with delight, "VOLUNTEER." But with this the cautious animals had vanished like bubbles. But Dick told Christopher they would be sure to come back; he ordered Ucatella into the wagon, and told her to warn Phœbe not to be frightened if guns should be fired. This soothing message brought Phœbe's white face out between the curtains, and she implored them to get into the wagon, and not tempt Providence.

"Not till I have got thee a kaross of jackal's fur."

"I'll never wear it!" said Phœbe violently, to divert him from his purpose.

"Time will show," said Dick dryly. "These varmint are on and off like shadows, and as cunning as Old Nick. We two will walk on quite unconcerned like, and as soon as ever the varmint are at our heels you give us the office; and we'll pepper their fur — won't we, doctor?"

"We — will — pepper — their fur," said Christopher,

repeating what to him was a lesson in the ancient and venerable English tongue.

So they walked on expectant; and by and by the four-footed shadows with large lime-light eyes came stealing on; and Phœbe shrieked, and they vanished before the men could draw a bead on them.

"Thou's no use at this work, Pheeb," said Dick. "Shut thy eyes, and let us have Yuke."

"Iss, master: here I be."

"You can bleat like a lamb; for I've heard ye."

"Iss, master. I bleats beautiful;" and she showed snowy teeth from ear to ear.

"Well, then, when the varmint are at our heels, draw in thy woolly head, and bleat like a young lamb. They won't turn from that, I know, the vagabonds."

Matters being thus prepared, they sauntered on; but the jackals were very wary. They came like shadows, so departed — a great many times: but at last being re-enforced, they lessened the distance, and got so close, that Ucatella withdrew her head, and bleated faintly inside the wagon. The men turned, levelling their rifles, and found the troop within twenty yards of them. They wheeled directly: but the four barrels poured their flame, four loud reports startled the night, and one jackal lay dead as a stone, another limped behind the flying crowd, and one lay kicking. He was soon despatched, and both carcasses flung over the patient oxen; and good-by jackals for the rest of that journey.

Ucatella, with all a Kafir's love of fire-arms, clapped her hands with delight. "My child shoots loud and strong," said she.

"Ay, ay," replied Phœbe; "they are all alike; wherever there's men, look for quarrelling and firing off. We had only to sit quiet in the wagon."

"Ay," said Dick, "the cattle especially — for it is

them the varmint were after — and let 'em eat my Hottentots."

At this picture of the cattle inside the wagon, and the jackals supping on cold Hottentot alongside, Phœbe, who had no more humor than a cat, but a heart of gold, shut up, and turned red with confusion at her false estimate of the recent transaction in fur.

When the sun rose they found themselves in a tract somewhat less arid and inhuman; and, at last, at the rise of a gentle slope, they saw, half a mile before them, a large farmhouse partly clad with creepers, and a little plot of turf, the fruit of eternal watering; item, a flower-bed; item, snow-white palings; item, an air of cleanliness and neatness scarcely known to those dirty descendants of clean ancestors, the Boers. At some distance a very large dam glittered in the sun, and a troop of snow-white sheep were watering at it.

"ENGLAND!" cried Christopher.

"Ay, sir," said Phœbe; "as nigh as man can make it." But soon she began to fret: "Oh, dear! where are they all? If it was me, I'd be at the door looking out. Ah, there goes Yuke to rouse them up."

"Come, Pheeb, don't you fidget," said Dick kindly. "Why, the lazy lot are scarce out of their beds by this time."

"More shame for 'em. If they were away from me, and coming home, I should be at the door day *and* night, I know. Ah!"

She uttered a scream of delight, for just then, out came Ucatella, with little Tommy on her shoulder, and danced along to meet her. As she came close, she raised the chubby child high in the air, and he crowed; and then she lowered him to his mother, who rushed at him, seized, and devoured him with a hundred inarticulate cries of joy and love unspeakable.

"NATURE!" said Christopher dogmatically, recognizing an old acquaintance, and booking it as one more conquest gained over the past. But there was too much excitement over the cherub to attend to him. So he watched the woman gravely, and began to moralize with all his might. "This," said he, "is what we used to call maternal love; and all animals had it, and that is why the noble savage went for him. It was very good of you, Miss Savage," said the poor soul sententiously.

"Good of her!" cried Phœbe. "She is all goodness. Savage, find me a Dutchwoman like her! I'll give her a good cuddle for it;" and she took the Kafir round the neck, and gave her a hearty kiss, and made the little boy kiss her too.

At this moment out came a collie dog, hunting Ucatella by scent alone, which process landed him headlong in the group; he gave loud barks of recognition, fawned on Phœbe and Dick, smelt poor Christopher, gave a growl of suspicion, and lurked about squinting, dissatisfied, and lowering his tail.

"Thou art wrong, lad, for once," said Dick; "for he's an old friend, and a good one."

"After the dog, perhaps some Christian will come to welcome us," said poor Phœbe.

Obedient to the wish, out walked Sophy, the English nurse, a scraggy woman, with a very cocked nose and thin, pinched lips, and an air of respectability and pertness mingled. She dropped a short courtesy, shot the glance of a basilisk at Ucatella, and said stiffly, "You are welcome home, ma'am." Then she took the little boy as one having authority. Not that Phœbe would have surrendered him; but just then Mr. Falcon strolled out, with a cigar in his mouth, and Phœbe, with her heart in *her* mouth, flew to meet him. There was a

rapturous conjugal embrace, followed by mutual inquiries; and the wagon drew up at the door. Then, for the first time, Falcon observed Staines, saw at once he was a gentleman, and touched his hat to him, to which Christopher responded in kind, and remembered he had done so in the locked-up past.

Phœbe instantly drew her husband apart by the sleeve. "Who do you think that is? You'll never guess. 'Tis the great doctor that saved Dick's life in England with cutting of his throat. But, oh, my dear, he is not the man he was. He is afflicted. Out of his mind partly. Well, we must cure him, and square the account for Dick. I'm a proud woman at finding him, and bringing him here to make him all right again, I can tell you. Oh, I am happy, I am happy. Little did I think to be so happy as I am. And, my dear, I have brought you a whole sackful of newspapers, old and new."

"That is a good girl. But tell me a little more about him. What is his name?"

"Christie."

"Dr. Christie?"

"No doubt. He wasn't an apothecary, or a chemist, you may be sure, but a high doctor, and the cleverest ever was or ever will be: and isn't it sad, love, to see him brought down so? My heart yearns for the poor man: and then his wife — the sweetest, loveliest creature you ever — oh!" Phœbe stopped very short, for she remembered something all of a sudden; nor did she ever again give Falcon a chance of knowing that the woman, whose presence had so disturbed him, was this very Dr. Christie's wife. "Curious!" thought she to herself, "the world to be so large, and yet so small:" then aloud, "They are unpacking the wagon; come, dear. I don't think I have forgotten anything of yours. There's cigars, and tobacco, and powder, and shot, and bullets,

and everything to make you comfortable, as my duty 'tis; and — oh, but I'm a happy woman."

Hottentots, big and little, clustered about the wagon. Treasure after treasure was delivered with cries of delight; the dogs found out it was a joyful time, and barked about the wheeled treasury; and the place did not quiet down till sunset.

A plain but tidy little room was given to Christopher, and he slept there like a top. Next morning his nurse called him up to help her water the grass. She led the way with a tub on her head and two buckets in it. She took him to the dam; when she got there she took out the buckets, left one on the bank, and gave the other to Christie. She then went down the steps till the water was up to her neck, and bade Christie fill the tub. He poured eight bucketsful in. Then she came slowly out, straight as an arrow, balancing this tub full on her head. Then she held out her hands for the two buckets. Christie filled them, wondering, and gave them to her. She took them like toy buckets, and glided slowly home with this enormous weight, and never spilled a drop. Indeed, the walk was more smooth and noble than ever, if possible.

When she reached the house, she hailed a Hottentot, and it cost the man and Christopher a great effort of strength to lower her tub between them.

"What a vertebral column you must have!" said Christopher.

"You must not speak bad words, my child," said she. "Now, you water the grass and the flowers." She gave him a watering-pot, and watched him maternally; but did not put a hand to it. She evidently considered this part of the business as child's play, and not a fit exercise of her powers.

It was only by drowning that little oasis twice a day that the grass was kept green and the flowers alive.

She found him other jobs in course of the day, and indeed he was always helping somebody or other, and became quite ruddy, bronzed, and plump of cheek, and wore a strange look of happiness, except at times when he got apart, and tried to recall the distant past. Then he would knit his brow, and looked perplexed and sad.

They were getting quite used to him, and he to them, when one day he did not come in to dinner. Phœbe sent out for him; but they could not find him.

The sun set. Phœbe became greatly alarmed, and even Dick was anxious.

They all turned out, with guns and dogs, and hunted for him beneath the stars.

Just before daybreak Dick Dale saw a fire sparkle by the side of a distant thicket. He went to it, and there was Ucatella seated, calm and grand as antique statue, and Christopher lying by her side, with a shawl thrown over him. As Dale came hurriedly up, she put her finger to her lips, and said, "My child sleeps. Do not wake him. When he sleeps, he hunts the past, as Collie hunts the springbok."

"Here's a go," said Dick. Then, hearing a chuckle, he looked up, and was aware of a comical appendage to the scene. There hung, head downwards, from a branch, a Kafir boy, who was, in fact, the brother of the stately Ucatella, only went further into antiquity for his models of deportment; for, as she imitated the antique marbles, he reproduced the habits of that epoch when man roosted, and was arboreal. Wheel somersaults, and, above all, swinging head downwards from a branch, were the sweeteners of his existence.

"Oh! *you* are there, are you?" said Dick.

"Iss," said Ucatella. "Tim good boy. Tim found my child."

"Well," said Dick, "he has chosen a nice place. This

is the clump the last lion came out of, at least they say so. For my part, I never saw an African lion; Falcon says they've all took ship, and gone to England. However, I shall stay here with my rifle till daybreak. 'Tis tempting Providence to lie down on the skirt of a wood for Lord knows what to jump out on ye unawares."

Tim was sent home for Hottentots, and Christopher was carried home, still sleeping, and laid on his own bed.

He slept twenty-four hours more, and, when he was fairly awake, a sort of mist seemed to clear away in places, and he remembered things at random. He remembered being at sea on the raft with the dead body; that picture was quite vivid to him. He remembered, too, being in the hospital, and meeting Phœbe, and every succeeding incident; but as respected the more distant past, he could not recall it by any effort of his will. His mind could only go into that remoter past by material stepping-stones; and what stepping-stones he had about him here led him back to general knowledge, but not to his private history.

In this condition he puzzled them all strangely at the farm; his mind was alternately so clear and so obscure. He would chat with Phœbe, and sometimes give her a good practical hint; but the next moment, helpless for want of memory, that great faculty without which judgment cannot act, having no material.

After some days of this, he had another great sleep. It brought him back the distant past in chapters. His wedding-day. His wife's face and dress upon that day. His parting with her: his whole voyage out: but, strange to say, it swept away one-half of that which he had recovered at his last sleep, and he no longer remembered clearly how he came to be at Dale's Kloof.

Thus his mind might be compared to one climbing a

slippery place, who gains a foot or two, then slips back; but on the whole gains more than he loses.

He took a great liking to Falcon. That gentleman had the art of pleasing, and the tact never to offend.

Falcon affected to treat the poor soul's want of memory as a common infirmity; pretended he was himself very often troubled in the same way, and advised him to read the newspapers. "My good wife," said he, "has brought me a whole file of the *Cape Gazette*. I'd read them if I was you. The deuce is in it, if you don't rake up something or other."

Christopher thanked him warmly for this: he got the papers to his own little room, and had always one or two in his pocket for reading. At first he found a good many hard words that puzzled him; and he borrowed a pencil of Phœbe, and noted them down. Strange to say, the words that puzzled him were always common words, that his unaccountable memory had forgotten: a hard word, he was sure to remember that.

One day he had to ask Falcon the meaning of "spendthrift." Falcon told him briefly. He could have illustrated the word by a striking example; but he did not. He added, in his polite way, "No fellow can understand all the words in a newspaper. Now, here's a word in mine — 'Anemometer;' who the deuce can understand such a word?"

"Oh, *that* is a common word enough," said poor Christopher. "It means a machine for measuring the force of the wind."

"Oh, indeed," said Falcon; but did not believe a word of it.

One sultry day Christopher had a violent headache, and complained to Ucatella. She told Phœbe, and they bound his brows with a wet handkerchief, and advised him to keep in-doors. He sat down in the coolest part

of the house, and held his head with his hands, for it seemed as if it would explode into two great fragments.

All in a moment the sky was overcast with angry clouds, whirling this way and that. Huge drops of hail pattered down, and the next minute came a tremendous flash of lightning, accompanied, rather than followed, by a crash of thunder close over their heads.

This was the opening. Down came a deluge out of clouds that looked mountains of pitch, and made the day night but for the fast and furious strokes of lightning that fired the air. The scream of wind and awful peals of thunder completed the horrors of the scene.

In the midst of this, by what agency I know no more than science or a sheep does, something went off inside Christopher's head, like a pistol-shot. He gave a sort of scream, and dashed out into the weather.

Phœbe heard his scream and his flying footstep, and uttered an ejaculation of fear. The whole household was alarmed, and, under other circumstances, would have followed him; but you could not see ten yards.

A chill sense of impending misfortune settled on the house. Phœbe threw her apron over her head, and rocked in her chair.

Dick himself looked very grave.

Ucatella would have tried to follow him; but Dick forbade her. "'Tis no use," said he. "When it clears, we that be men will go for him."

"Pray Heaven you may find him alive!"

"I don't think but what we shall. There's nowhere he can fall down to hurt himself, nor yet drown himself, but our dam; and he has not gone that way. But" —

"But what?"

"If we do find him, we must take him back to Cape Town, before he does himself, or some one, a mischief. Why, Phœbe, don't you see the man has gone raving mad?"

CHAPTER XIX.

The electrified man rushed out into the storm, but he scarcely felt it in his body; the effect on his mind overpowered hail-stones. The lightning seemed to light up the past; the mighty explosions of thunder seemed cannon strokes knocking down a wall, and letting in his whole life.

Six hours the storm raged, and, before it ended, he had recovered nearly his whole past, except his voyage with Captain Dodd — that, indeed, he never recovered — and the things that happened to him in the hospital before he met Phœbe Falcon and her brother: and as soon as he had recovered his lost memory, his body began to shiver at the hail and rain. He tried to find his way home, but missed it; not so much, however, but that he recovered it as soon as it began to clear, and just as they were coming out to look for him, he appeared before them, dripping, shivering, very pale and worn, with the handkerchief still about his head.

At sight of him, Dick slipped back to his sister, and said, rather roughly, "There now, you may leave off crying: he is come home; and to-morrow I take him to Cape Town."

Christopher crept in, a dismal, sinister figure.

"Oh, sir," said Phœbe, "was this a day for a Christian to be out in? How could you go and frighten us so?"

"Forgive me, madam," said Christopher humbly; "I was not myself."

"The best thing you can do now is to go to bed, and let us send you up something warm."

"You are very good," said Christopher, and retired with the air of one too full of great amazing thoughts to gossip.

He slept thirty hours at a stretch, and then, awaking in the dead of night, he saw the past even more clear and vivid; he lighted his candle and began to grope in the *Cape Gazette*. As to dates, he now remembered when he had sailed from England, and also from Madeira. Following up this clew, he found in the *Gazette* a notice that H. M. ship Amphitrite had been spoken off the Cape, and had reported the melancholy loss of a promising physician and man of science, Dr. Staines.

The account said every exertion had been made to save him, but in vain.

Staines ground his teeth with rage at this. "Every exertion! the false-hearted curs. They left me to drown, without one manly effort to save me. Curse them, and curse all the world."

Pursuing his researches rapidly, he found a much longer account of a raft picked up by Captain Dodd, with a white man on it and a dead body, the white man having on him a considerable sum in money and jewels.

Then a new anxiety chilled him. There was not a word to identify him with Dr. Staines. The idea had never occurred to the editor of the *Cape Gazette*. Still less would it occur to any one in England. At this moment his wife must be mourning for him. "Poor — poor Rosa!"

But perhaps the fatal news might not have reached her.

That hope was dashed away as soon as found. Why, these were all *old newspapers*. That gentlemanly man who had lent them to him had said so.

Old! yet they completed the year 1867.

He now tore through them for the dates alone, and

soon found they went to 1868. Yet they were old papers. He had sailed in May, 1867.

"My God!" he cried, in agony, "I HAVE LOST A YEAR."

This thought crushed him. By and by he began to carry this awful idea into details. "My Rosa has worn mourning for me, and put it off again. I am dead to her, and to all the world."

He wept long and bitterly.

Those tears cleared his brain still more. For all that, he was not yet himself; at least, I doubt it; his insanity, driven from the intellect, fastened one lingering claw into his moral nature, and hung on by it. His soul filled with bitterness and a desire to be revenged on mankind for their injustice, and this thought possessed him more than reason.

He joined the family at breakfast; and never a word all the time. But when he got up to go, he said, in a strange, dogged way, as if it went against the grain, "God bless the house that succors the afflicted." Then he went out to brood alone.

"Dick," said Phœbe, "there's a change. I'll never part with him: and look, there's Collie following him, that never could abide him."

"Part with him?" said Reginald. "Of course not. He is a gentleman, and they are not so common in Africa."

Dick, who hated Falcon, ignored this speech entirely, and said, "Well, Pheeb, you and Collie are wiser than I am. Take your own way, and don't blame me if anything happens."

Soon Christopher paid the penalty of returning reason. He suffered all the poignant agony a great heart can endure.

So this was his reward for his great act of self-denial

in leaving his beloved wife. He had lost his patient; he had lost the income from that patient; his wife was worse off than before, and had doubtless suffered the anguish of a loving heart bereaved. His mind, which now seemed more vigorous than ever, after its long rest, placed her before his very eyes, pale, and worn with grief, in her widow's cap.

At the picture, he cried like the rain. He could give her joy, by writing; but he could not prevent her from suffering a whole year of misery.

Turning this over in connection with their poverty, his evil genius whispered, "By this time she has received the six thousand pounds for your death. *She* would never think of that; but her father has: and there is her comfort assured, in spite of the caitiffs who left her husband to drown like a dog."

"I know my Rosa," he thought. "She has swooned — ah, my poor darling — she has raved — she has wept," he wept himself at the thought — "she has mourned every indiscreet act, as if it was a crime. But she *has* done all this. Her good and loving but shallow nature is now at rest from the agonies of bereavement, and nought remains but sad and tender regrets. She can better endure that than poverty: cursed poverty, which has brought her and me to this, and is the only real evil in the world, but bodily pain."

Then came a struggle, that lasted a whole week, and knitted his brows, and took the color from his cheek; but it ended in the triumph of love and hate, over conscience and common sense. His Rosa should not be poor; and he would cheat some of those contemptible creatures called men, who had done him nothing but injustice, and at last had sacrificed his life like a rat's.

When the struggle was over, and the fatal resolution taken, then he became calmer, less solitary, and more sociable.

Phœbe, who was secretly watching him with a woman's eye, observed this change in him, and, with benevolent intentions, invited him one day to ride round the farm with her. He consented readily. She showed him the fields devoted to maize and wheat, and then the sheep-folds. Tim's sheep were apparently deserted; but he was discovered swinging head downwards from the branch of a camel-thorn, and seeing him, it did strike one that if he had had a tail he would have been swinging by that. Phœbe called to him: he never answered, but set off running to her, and landed himself under her nose in a wheel somersault.

"I hope you are watching them, Tim," said his mistress.

"Iss, missy, always washing 'em."

"Why, there's one straying towards the wood now."

"He not go far," said Tim coolly. The young monkey stole off a little way, then fell flat, and uttered the cry of a jackal, with startling precision. Back went the sheep to his comrades post haste, and Tim effected a somersault and a chuckle.

"You are a clever boy," said Phœbe. "So that is how you manage them."

"Dat one way, missy," said Tim, not caring to reveal all his resources at once.

Then Phœbe rode on, and showed Christopher the ostrich pan. It was a large basin, a form the soil often takes in these parts; and in it strutted several full-grown ostriches and their young, bred on the premises. There was a little dam of water, and plenty of food about. They were herded by a Kafir infant of about six, black, glossy, fat, and clean, being in the water six times a day.

Sometimes one of the older birds would show an inclination to stray out of the pan. Then the infant rolled

after her, and tapped her ankles with a wand. She instantly came back, but without any loss of dignity, for she strutted with her nose in the air, affecting completely to ignore the inferior little animal, that was nevertheless controlling her movements. "There's a farce," said Phœbe. "But you would not believe the money they cost me, nor the money they bring me in. Grain will not sell here for a quarter its value: and we can't afford to send it to Cape Town, twenty days and back; but finery, that sells everywhere. I gather sixty pounds the year off those poor fowls' backs — clear profit."

She showed him the granary, and told him there wasn't such another in Africa. This farm had belonged to one of the old Dutch settlers, and that breed had been going down this many a year. "You see, sir, Dick and I being English, and not downright in want of money, we can't bring ourselves to sell grain to the middlemen for nothing, so we store it, hoping for better times, that maybe will never come. Now I'll show you how the dam is made."

They inspected the dam all round. "This is our best friend of all," said she. "Without this the sun would turn us all to tinder, — crops, flowers, beasts, and folk."

"Oh, indeed," said Staines. "Then it is a pity you have not built it more scientifically. I must have a look at this."

"Ay do, sir, and advise us if you see anything wrong. But hark! it is milking time. Come and see that." So she led the way to some sheds, and there they found several cows being milked, each by a little calf and a little Hottentot at the same time, and both fighting and jostling each other for the udder. Now and then a young cow, unused to incongruous twins, would kick impatiently at both animals and scatter them.

"That is their way," said Phœbe: "they have got it into their silly Hottentot heads as kye won't yield their milk if the calf is taken away; and it is no use arguing with 'em; they will have their own way; but they are very trusty and honest, poor things. We soon found that out. When we came here first it was in a hired wagon, and Hottentot drivers: so when we came to settle I made ready for a bit of a wrangle. But my maid Sophy, that is nurse now, and a great despiser of heathens, she says, 'Don't you trouble; them nasty ignorant blacks never charges more than their due.' 'I forgive 'em,' says I; 'I wish all white folk was as nice.' However, I did give them a trifle over, for luck: and then they got together and chattered something near the door, hand in hand. 'La, Sophy,' says I, 'what is up now?' Says she, 'They are blessing of us. Things is come to a pretty pass, for ignorant Muslinmen heathen to be blessing Christian folk.' 'Well,' says I, 'it won't hurt us any.' 'I don't know,' says she. 'I don't want the devil prayed over me.' So she cocked that long nose of hers and followed it in a doors."

By this time they were near the house, and Phœbe was obliged to come to her postscript, for the sake of which, believe me, she had uttered every syllable of this varied chat. "Well, sir," said she, affecting to proceed without any considerable change of topic, "and how do you find yourself? Have you discovered the past?"

"I have, madam. I remember every leading incident of my life."

"And has it made you happier?" said Phœbe softly.

"No," said Christopher gravely. "Memory has brought me misery."

"I feared as much; for you have lost your fine color, and your eyes are hollow, and lines on your poor brow that were not there before. Are you not sorry you have discovered the past?"

"No, Mrs. Falcon. Give me the sovereign gift of reason, with all the torture it can inflict. I thank God for returning memory, even with the misery it brings."

Phœbe was silent a long time: then she said in a low, gentle voice, and with the indirectness of a truly feminine nature, "I have plenty of writing-paper in the house; and the post goes south to-morrow, such as 'tis."

Christopher struggled with his misery, and trembled.

He was silent a long time. Then he said, "No. It is her interest that I should be dead."

"Well, but, sir — take a thought."

"Not a word more, I implore you. I am the most miserable man that ever breathed." As he spoke, two bitter tears forced their way.

Phœbe cast a look of pity on him, and said no more; but she shook her head. Her plain common sense revolted.

However, it did not follow he would be in the same mind next week: so she was in excellent spirits at her protégé's recovery, and very proud of her cure, and celebrated the event with a roaring supper, including an English ham, and a bottle of port wine; and, ten to one, that was English too.

Dick Dale looked a little incredulous, but he did not spare the ham any the more for that.

After supper, in a pause of conversation, Staines turned to Dick, and said, rather abruptly, "Suppose that dam of yours were to burst and empty its contents, would it not be a great misfortune to you?"

"Misfortune, sir! Don't talk of it. Why, it would ruin us, beast and body."

"Well, it will burst, if it is not looked to."

"Dale's Kloof dam burst! the biggest and strongest for a hundred miles round."

"You deceive yourself. It is not scientifically built,

to begin, and there is a cause at work that will infallibly burst it, if not looked to in time."

"And what is that, sir?"

"The dam is full of crabs."

"So 'tis; but what of them?"

"I detected two of them that had perforated the dyke from the wet side to the dry, and water was trickling through the channel they had made. Now, for me to catch two that had come right through, there must be a great many at work honeycombing your dyke; those channels, once made, will be enlarged by the permeating water, and a mere cupful of water forced into a dyke by the great pressure of a heavy column has an expansive power quite out of proportion to the quantity forced in. Colossal dykes have been burst in this way with disastrous effects. Indeed, it is only a question of time, and I would not guarantee your dyke twelve hours. It is full, too, with the heavy rains."

"Here's a go!" said Dick, turning pale. "Well, if it is to burst, it must."

"Why so? You can make it safe in a few hours. You have got a clumsy contrivance for letting off the excess of water: let us go and relieve the dam at once of two feet of water. That will make it safe for a day or two, and to-morrow we will puddle it afresh, and demolish those busy excavators."

He spoke with such authority and earnestness, that they all got up from table; a horn was blown that soon brought the Hottentots, and they all proceeded to the dam. With infinite difficulty they opened the waste sluice, lowered the water two feet, and so drenched the arid soil that in forty-eight hours flowers unknown sprang up.

Next morning, under the doctor's orders, all the black men and boys were diving with lumps of stiff clay and

puddling the endangered wall with a thick wall of it. This took all the people the whole day.

Next day the clay wall was carried two feet higher, and then the doctor made them work on the other side and buttress the dyke with supports so enormous as seemed extravagant to Dick and Phœbe; but, after all, it was as well to be on the safe side, they thought: and soon they were sure of it, for the whole work was hardly finished when the news came in that the dyke of a neighboring Boer, ten miles off, had exploded like a cannon, and emptied itself in five minutes, drowning the farm-yard and floating the furniture, but leaving them all to perish of drought; and indeed the Boer's cart came every day, with empty barrels, for some time, to beg water of the Dales. Ucatella pondered all this, and said her doctor child was wise.

This brief excitement over, Staines went back to his own gloomy thoughts, and they scarcely saw him, except at supper-time.

One evening he surprised them all by asking if they would add to all their kindness by lending him a horse, and a spade, and a few pounds to go to the diamond fields.

Dick Dale looked at his sister. She said, "We had rather lend them you to go home with, sir, if you must leave us; but, dear heart, I was half in hopes — Dick and I were talking it over only yesterday — that you would go partners like with us; ever since you saved the dam."

"I have too little to offer for that, Mrs. Falcon; and, besides, I am driven into a corner. I must make money quickly, or not at all: the diamonds are only three hundred miles off: for heaven's sake, let me try my luck."

They tried to dissuade him, and told him not one in fifty did any good at it.

"Ay, but *I* shall," said he. "Great bad luck is followed by great good luck, and I feel my turn is come. Not that I rely on luck. An accident directed my attention to the diamond a few years ago, and I read a number of prime works upon the subject that told me of things not known to the miners. It is clear, from the Cape journals, that they are looking for diamonds in the river only. Now, I am sure that is a mistake. Diamonds, like gold, have their matrix, and it is comparatively few gems that get washed into the river. I am confident that I shall find the volcanic matrix, and perhaps make my fortune in a week or two."

When the dialogue took this turn, Reginald Falcon's cheek began to flush, and his eyes to glitter.

Christopher continued: "You who have befriended me so will not turn back, I am sure, when I have such a chance before me; and as for the small sum of money I shall require, I will repay you some day, even if" —

"La, sir, don't talk so. If you put it that way, why, the best horse we have, and fifty pounds in good English gold, they are at your service to-morrow."

"And pick and spade to boot," said Dick, "and a double rifle, for there are lions, and Lord knows what, between this and the Vaal river."

"God bless you both!" said Christopher. "I will start to-morrow."

"And I'll go with you," said Reginald Falcon.

CHAPTER XX.

"Heaven forbid!" said Phœbe. "No, my dear, no more diamonds for us. We never had but one, and it brought us trouble."

"Nonsense, Phœbe," replied Falcon; "it was not the diamond's fault. You know I have often wanted to go there, but you objected. You said you were afraid some evil would befall me. But now Solomon himself is going to the mines, let us have no more of that nonsense. We will take our rifles and our pistols."

"There — there — rifles and pistols," cried Phœbe; "that shows."

"And we will be there in a week; stay a month, and home with our pockets full of diamonds."

"And find me dead of a broken heart."

"Broken fiddlestick! We have been parted longer than that, and yet here we are all right."

"Ay, but the pitcher that goes too often to the well gets broke at last. No, Reginald, now I have tasted three years' happiness and peace of mind, I cannot go through what I used in England. Oh, doctor! have you the heart to part man and wife, that have never been a day from each other all these years?"

"Mrs. Falcon, I would not do it for all the diamonds in Brazil. No, Mr. Falcon, I need hardly say how charmed I should be to have your company: but that is a pleasure I shall certainly deny myself, after what your good wife has said. I owe her too much to cause her a single pang."

"Doctor," said the charming Reginald, "you are a

gentleman and side with the lady. Quite right. It adds to my esteem, if possible. Make your mind easy; I will go alone. I am not a farmer. I am dead sick of this monotonous life; and, since I am compelled to speak my mind, a little ashamed, as a gentleman, of living on my wife and her brother, and doing nothing for myself. So I shall go to the Vaal river, and see a little life; here there's nothing but vegetation — and not much of that. Not a word more, Phœbe, if you please. I am a good, easy, affectionate husband, but I am a man, and not a child to be tied to a woman's apron-strings, however much I may love and respect her."

Dick put in his word: "Since you are so independent, you can *walk* to the Vaal river. I can't spare a couple of horses."

This hit the sybarite hard, and he cast a bitter glance of hatred at his brother-in-law, and fell into a moody silence.

But when he got Phœbe to himself, he descanted on her selfishness, Dick's rudeness, and his own wounded dignity, till he made her quite anxious he should have his own way. She came to Staines, with red eyes, and said, "Tell me, doctor, will there be any women up there — to take care of you?"

"Not a petticoat in the place, I believe. It is a very rough life; and how Falcon could think of leaving you and sweet little Tommy, and this life of health, and peace, and comfort — "

"Yet *you* do leave us, sir."

"I am the most unfortunate man upon the earth; Falcon is one of the happiest. Would I leave wife and child to go there? Ah me! I am dead to those I love. This is my one chance of seeing my darling again for many a long year perhaps. Oh, I must not speak of *her* — it unmans me. My good, kind friend, I'll tell you

what to do. When we are all at supper, let a horse be saddled and left in the yard for me. I'll bid you all good-night, and I'll put fifty miles between us before morning. Even then *he* need not be told I am gone; he will not follow me."

"You are very good, sir," said Phœbe; "but no. Too much has been said. I can't have him humbled by my brother, nor any one. He says I am selfish. Perhaps I am; though I never was called so. I can't bear he should think me selfish. He *will* go, and so let us have no ill blood about it. Since he is to go, of course I'd much liever he should go with you than by himself. You are sure there are no women up there — to take care of — you — both? You must be purse-bearer, sir, and look to every penny. He is too generous when he has got money to spend."

In short, Reginald had played so upon her heart, that she now urged the joint expedition, only she asked a delay of a day or two to equip them, and steel herself to the separation.

Staines did not share those vague fears that overpowered the wife, whose bitter experiences were unknown to him; but he felt uncomfortable at her condition — for now she was often in tears — and he said all he could to comfort her; and he also advised her how to profit by these terrible diamonds, in her way. He pointed out to her that her farm lay right in the road to the diamonds, yet the traffic all shunned her, passing twenty miles to the westward. Said he, "You should profit by all your resources. You have wood, a great rarity in Africa; order a portable forge; run up a building where miners can sleep, another where they can feed; the grain you have so wisely refused to sell, grind it into flour."

"Dear heart! why, there's neither wind nor water to turn a mill."

"But there are oxen. I'll show you how to make an ox-mill. Send your Cape cart into Cape Town for iron lathes, for coffee and tea, and groceries by the hundredweight. The moment you are ready — for success depends on the order in which we act — then prepare great boards, and plant them twenty miles south. Write or paint on them, very large, 'The nearest way to the Diamond Mines, through Dale's Kloof, where is excellent accommodation for man and beast. Tea, coffee, home-made bread, fresh butter, etc., etc.' Do this, and you will soon leave off decrying diamonds. This is the sure way to coin them. I myself take the doubtful way; but I can't help it. I am a dead man, and swift good fortune will give me life. You can afford to go the slower road and the surer."

Then he drew her a model of an ox-mill, and of a miner's dormitory, the partitions six feet six apart, so that these very partitions formed the bedstead, the bedsacking being hooked to the uprights. He drew his model for twenty bedrooms.

The portable forge and the ox-mill pleased Dick Dale most, but the partitioned bedsteads charmed Phœbe. She said, "Oh, doctor, how can one man's head hold so many things? If there's a man on earth I can trust my husband with, 'tis you. But if things go cross up there, promise me you will come back at once and cast in your lot with us. We have got money and stock, and you have got headpiece; we might do very well together. Indeed, indeed we might. Promise me. Oh, do, please, promise me!"

"I promise you."

And on this understanding, Staines and Falcon were equipped with rifles, pickaxe, shovels, waterproofs, and full saddle-bags, and started, with many shakings of the hand, and many tears from Phœbe, for the diamond washings.

CHAPTER XXI.

Phœbe's tears at parting made Staines feel uncomfortable, and he said so.

"Pooh, pooh!" said Falcon, "crying for nothing does a woman good."

Christopher stared at him.

Falcon's spirits rose as they proceeded. He was like a boy let loose from school. His fluency and charm of manner served, however, to cheer a singularly dreary journey.

The travellers soon entered on a vast and forbidding region, that wearied the eye; at their feet a dull, rusty carpet of dried grass and wild camomile, with pale-red sand peeping through the burnt and scanty herbage. On the low mounds, that looked like heaps of sifted ashes, struggled now and then into sickliness a ragged, twisted shrub. There were flowers too, but so sparse, that they sparkled vainly in the colorless waste, which stretched to the horizon. The farmhouses were twenty miles apart, and nine out of ten of them were new ones built by the Boers since they degenerated into white savages: mere huts, with domed kitchens behind them. In the dwelling-house the whole family pigged together, with raw flesh drying on the rafters, stinking skins in a corner, parasitical vermin of all sorts blackening the floor, and particularly a small, biting, and odoriferous tortoise, compared with which the insect a London washerwoman brings into your house in her basket, is a stroke with a feather — and all this without the excuse of penury; for many of these were shepherd kings, sheared four thou-

sand fleeces a year, and owned a hundred horses and horned cattle.

These Boers are compelled, by unwritten law, to receive travellers and water their cattle; but our travellers, after one or two experiences, ceased to trouble them; for, added to the dirt, the men were sullen, the women moody, silent, brainless; the whole reception churlish. Staines detected in them an uneasy consciousness that they had descended, in more ways than one, from a civilized race; and the superior bearing of a European seemed to remind them what they had been, and might have been, and were not; so, after an attempt or two, our adventurers avoided the Boers, and tried the Kafirs. They found the savages socially superior, though their moral character does not rank high.

The Kafir cabins they entered were caves, lighted only by the door, but deliciously cool, and quite clean; the floors of puddled clay or ants' nests, and very clean. On entering these cool retreats, the flies that had tormented them shirked the cool grot, and buzzed off to the nearest farm to batten on congenial foulness. On the fat, round, glossy babies, not a speck of dirt, whereas the little Boers were cakes thereof. The Kafir would meet them at the door, his clean black face all smiles and welcome. The women and grown girls would fling a spotless handkerchief over their shoulders in a moment, and display their snowy teeth, in unaffected joy at sight of an Englishman.

At one of these huts, one evening, they met with something St. Paul ranks above cleanliness even, viz., Christianity. A neighboring lion had just eaten a Hottentot *faute de mieux;* and these good Kafirs wanted the Europeans not to go on at night and be eaten for dessert. But they could not speak a word of English, and pantomimic expression exists in theory alone. In

vain the women held our travellers by the coat-tails, and pointed to a distant wood. In vain Kafir *père* went on all-fours and growled sore. But at last a savage youth ran to the kitchen — for they never cook in the house — and came back with a brand, and sketched, on the wall of the hut, a lion with a mane down to the ground, and a saucer eye, not loving. The creature's paw rested on a hat and coat and another fragment or two of a European. The rest was fore-shortened, or else eaten.

The picture completed, the females looked, approved, and raised a dismal howl.

"A lion on the road," said Christopher gravely.

Then the undaunted Falcon seized the charcoal, and drew an Englishman in a theatrical attitude, left foot well forward, firing a gun, and a lion rolling head over heels like a buck rabbit, and blood squirting out of a hole in his perforated carcass.

The savages saw, and exulted. They were so off their guard as to confound representation with fact; they danced round the white warrior, and launched him to victory.

"Aha!" said Falcon, "I took the shine out of their lion, didn't I?"

"You did: and once there was a sculptor who showed a lion his marble group, a man trampling a lion, extracting his tongue, and so on; but report says it *did not convince the lion.*"

"Why, no; a lion is not an ass. But, for your comfort, there *are* no lions in this part of the world. They are myths. There were lions in Africa. But now they are all at the Zoo. And I wish I was there too."

"In what character — of a discontented animal — with every blessing? They would not take you in; too common in England. Hallo! this is something new. What lots of bushes! We should not have much chance with a lion here."

"There *are* no lions: it is not the Zoo," said Falcon; but he spurred on faster.

The country, however, did not change its feature; bushes and little acacias prevailed, and presently dark forms began to glide across at intervals.

The travellers held their breath, and pushed on; but at last their horses flagged; so they thought it best to stop and light a fire and stand upon their guard.

They did so, and Falcon sat with his rifle cocked, while Staines boiled coffee, and they drank it, and after two hours' halt, pushed on; and at last the bushes got more scattered, and they were on the dreary plain again. Falcon drew the rein, with a sigh of relief, and they walked their horses side by side.

"Well, what has become of the lions?" said Falcon jauntily. He turned in his saddle, and saw a large animal stealing behind them with its belly to the very earth, and eyes hot coals; he uttered an eldrich screech, fired both barrels, with no more aim than a baby, and spurred away, yelling like a demon. The animal fled another way, in equal trepidation at those tongues of flame and loud reports, and Christopher's horse reared and plunged, and deposited him promptly on the sward; but he held the bridle, mounted again, and rode after his companion. A stern chase is a long chase; and for that or some other reason he could never catch him again till sunrise. Being caught, he ignored the lioness, with cool hauteur: he said he had ridden on to find comfortable quarters: and craved thanks.

This was literally the only incident worth recording that the companions met with in three hundred miles.

On the sixth day out, towards afternoon, they found by inquiring they were near the diamond washings, and the short route was pointed out by an exceptionally civil Boer.

But Christopher's eye had lighted upon a sort of chain of knolls, or little round hills, devoid of vegetation, and he told Falcon he would like to inspect these, before going farther.

"Oh," said the Boer, "they are not on my farm, thank goodness! they are on my cousin Bulteel's;" and he pointed to a large white house about four miles distant, and quite off the road. Nevertheless, Staines insisted on going to it. But first they made up to one of these knolls, and examined it; it was about thirty feet high, and not a vestige of herbage on it; the surface was composed of sand and of lumps of gray limestone very hard, diversified with lots of quartz, mica, and other old formations.

Staines got to the top of it with some difficulty, and examined the surface all over. He came down again, and said, "All these little hills mark hot volcanic action — why, they are like boiling earth-bubbles — which is the very thing, under certain conditions, to turn carbonate of lime into diamonds. Now here is plenty of limestone unnaturally hard; and being in a diamond country, I can fancy no place more likely to be the matrix than these earth-bubbles. Let us tether the horses, and use our shovels."

They did so; and found one or two common crystals, and some jasper, and a piece of chalcedony all in little bubbles, but no diamond. Falcon said it was wasting time.

Just then the proprietor, a gigantic, pasty colonist, came up, with his pipe, and stood calmly looking on. Staines came down, and made a sort of apology. Bulteel smiled quietly, and asked what harm they could do him, raking that rubbish. "Rake it all avay, mine vriends," said he: "ve shall thank you moch."

He then invited them languidly to his house. They

went with him, and as he volunteered no more remarks, they questioned him, and learned his father had been a Hollander, and so had his vrow's. This accounted for the size and comparative cleanliness of his place. It was stuccoed with the lime of the country outside, and was four times as large as the miserable farmhouses of the degenerate Boers. For all this, the street door opened on the principal room, and that room was kitchen and parlor, only very large and wholesome. "But, Lord," as poor dear Pepys used to blurt out — "to see how some folk understand cleanliness!" The floor was made of powdered ants' nests, and smeared with fresh cow-dung every day. Yet these people were the cleanest Boers in the colony.

The vrow met them, with a snow-white collar and cuffs of Hamburgh linen, and the brats had pasty faces round as pumpkins, but shone with soap. The vrow was also pasty-faced, but gentle, and welcomed them with a smile, languid, but unequivocal.

The Hottentots took their horses, as a matter of course. Their guns were put in a corner. A clean cloth was spread, and they saw they were to sup and sleep there, though the words of invitation were never spoken.

At supper, sun-dried flesh, cabbage, and a savory dish the travellers returned to with gusto. Staines asked what it was: the vrow told him — locusts. They had stripped her garden, and filled her very rooms, and fallen in heaps under her walls; so she had pressed them, by the million, into cakes, had salted them lightly, and stored them, and they were excellent, baked.

After supper, the accomplished Reginald, observing a wire guitar, tuned it with some difficulty, and so twanged it, and sang ditties to it, that the flabby giant's pasty face wore a look of dreamy content over his everlasting pipe; and in the morning, after a silent breakfast, he

said, "Mine vriends, stay here a year or two, and rake in mine rubbish. Ven you are tired, here are springbok and antelopes, and you can shoot mit your rifles, and ve vil cook them, and you shall zing us zongs of Vaderland."

They thanked him heartily, and said they would stay a few days, at all events.

The placid Boer went a-farming; and the pair shouldered their pick and shovel, and worked on their heap all day, and found a number of pretty stones, but no diamond.

"Come," said Falcon, "we must go to the river;" and Staines acquiesced. "I bow to experience," said he.

At the threshold they found two of the little Bulteels, playing with pieces of quartz, crystal, etc., on the doorstone. One of these stones caught Staines's eye directly. It sparkled in a different way from the others: he examined it: it was the size of a white haricot bean, and one side of it polished by friction. He looked at it, and looked, and saw that it refracted the light. He felt convinced it was a diamond.

"Give the boy a penny for it," said the ingenious Falcon, on receiving the information.

"Oh!" said Staines. "Take advantage of a child?"

He borrowed it of the boy, and laid it on the table, after supper. "Sir," said he, "this is what we were raking in your kopjes for, and could not find it. It belongs to little Hans. Will you sell it us? We are not experts, but we think it may be a diamond. We will risk ten pounds on it."

"Ten pounds!" said the farmer. "Nay, we rob not travellers, mine vriend."

"But if it is a diamond, it is worth a hundred. See how it gains fire in the dusk."

In short, they forced the ten pounds on him, and next day went to work on another kopje.

But the simple farmer's conscience smote him. It was a slack time; so he sent four Hottentots, with shovels, to help these friendly maniacs. These worked away gayly, and the white men set up a sorting table, and sorted the stuff, and hammered the nodules, and at last found a little stone as big as a pea that refracted the light. Staines showed this to the Hottentots, and their quick eyes discovered two more that day, only smaller.

Next day, nothing but a splinter or two.

Then Staines determined to dig deeper, contrary to the general impression. He gave his reason: "Diamonds don't fall from the sky. They work up from the ground; and clearly the heat must be greater farther down."

Acting on this, they tried the next strata, but found it entirely barren. After that, however, they came to a fresh layer of carbonate, and here, Falcon hammering a large lump of conglomerate, out leaped, all of a sudden, a diamond big as a nut, that ran along the earth, gleaming like a star. It had polished angles and natural facets, and even a novice, with an eye in his head, could see it was a diamond of the purest water. Staines and Falcon shouted with delight, and made the blacks a present on the spot.

They showed the prize, at night, and begged the farmer to take to digging. There was ten times more money beneath his soil than on it.

Not he. He was a farmer: did not believe in diamonds.

Two days afterwards, another great find. Seven small diamonds.

Next day, a stone as large as a cob-nut, and with strange and beautiful streaks. They carried it home to dinner, and set it on the table, and told the family it was worth a thousand pounds. Buiteel scarcely looked at it; but the vrow trembled and all the young folk glowered at it.

In the middle of dinner, it exploded like a cracker, and went literally into diamond-dust.

"Dere goes von tousand pounds," said Bulteel, without moving a muscle.

Falcon swore. But Staines showed fortitude. "It was laminated," said he, "and exposure to the air was fatal."

Owing to the invaluable assistance of the Hottentots, they had in less than a month collected four large stones of pure water, and a wineglassful of small stones, when, one fine day, going to work calmly after breakfast, they found some tents pitched, and at least a score of dirty diggers, bearded like the pard, at work on the ground. Staines sent Falcon back to tell Bulteel, and suggest that he should at once order them off, or, better still, make terms with them. The phlegmatic Boer did neither.

In twenty-four hours it was too late. The place was rushed. In other words, diggers swarmed to the spot, with no idea of law but digger's law.

A thousand tents rose like mushrooms; and poor Bulteel stood smoking, and staring amazed, at his own door, and saw a veritable procession of wagons, Cape carts, and powdered travellers file past him to take possession of his hillocks. Him, the proprietor, they simply ignored; they had a committee who were to deal with all obstructions, landlords and tenants included. They themselves measured out Bulteel's farm into thirty-foot claims, and went to work with shovel and pick. They held Staines's claim sacred — that was diggers' law; but they confined it strictly to thirty feet square.

Had the friends resisted, their brains would have been knocked out. However, they gained this, that dealers poured in, and the market not being yet glutted, the price was good. Staines sold a few of the small stones for two hundred pounds. He showed one of the

larger stones. The dealer's eye glittered, but he offered only three hundred pounds, and this was so wide of the ascending scale, on which a stone of that importance is priced, that Staines reserved it for sale at Cape Town.

Nevertheless, he afterwards doubted whether he had not better have taken it; for the multitude of diggers turned out such a prodigious number of diamonds at Bulteel's pan, that a sort of panic fell on the market.

These dry diggings were a revelation to the world. Men began to think the diamond perhaps was a commoner stone than any one had dreamed it to be.

As to the discovery of stones, Staines and Falcon lost nothing by being confined to a thirty-foot claim. Compelled to dig deeper, they got into a rich strata, where they found garnets by the pint, and some small diamonds, and at last, one lucky day, their largest diamond. It weighed thirty-seven carats, and was a rich yellow. Now, when a diamond is clouded or off color, it is terribly depreciated; but a diamond with a positive color is called a fancy stone, and ranks with the purest stones.

"I wish I had this in Cape Town," said Staines.

"Why, I'll take it to Cape Town, if you like," said the changeable Falcon.

"You will?" said Christopher, surprised.

"Why not? I'm not much of a digger. I can serve our interest better by selling. I could get a thousand pounds for this at Cape Town."

"We will talk of that quietly," said Christopher.

Now, the fact is, Falcon, as a digger, was not worth a pin. He could not sort. His eyes would not bear the blinding glare of a tropical sun upon lime and dazzling bits of mica, quartz, crystal, white topaz, etc., in the midst of which the true glint of the royal stone had to be caught in a moment. He could not sort, and he had not the heart to dig. The only way to make him earn

his half was to turn him into the travelling and selling partner.

Christopher was too generous to tell him this; but he acted on it, and said he thought his was an excellent proposal; indeed, he had better take all the diamonds they had got to Dale's Kloof first, and show them to his wife, for her consolation: "And perhaps," said he, "in a matter of this importance, she will go to Cape Town with you, and try the market there."

"All right," said Falcon.

He sat and brooded over the matter a long time, and said, "Why make two bites of a cherry? They will only give us half the value at Cape Town; why not go by the steamer to England, before the London market is glutted, and all the world finds out that diamonds are as common as dirt?"

"Go to England! What! without your wife? I'll never be a party to that. Me part man and wife! If you knew my own story" —

"Why, who wants you?" said Reginald. "You don't understand. Phœbe is dying to visit England again; but she has got no excuse. If you like to give her one, she will be much obliged to you, I can tell you."

"Oh, that is a very different matter. If Mrs. Falcon can leave her farm" —

"Oh, that brute of a brother of hers is a very honest fellow, for that matter. She can trust the farm to him. Besides, it is only a month's voyage by the mail steamer."

This suggestion of Falcon's set Christopher's heart bounding, and his eyes glistening. But he restrained himself, and said, "This takes me by surprise; let me smoke a pipe over it."

He not only did that, but he lay awake all night.

The fact is that for some time past, Christopher had felt sharp twinges of conscience, and deep misgivings as

to the course he had pursued in leaving his wife a single day in the dark. Complete convalescence had cleared his moral sentiments, and perhaps, after all, the discovery of the diamonds had co-operated; since now the insurance money was no longer necessary to keep his wife from starving.

"Ah!" said he; "faith is a great quality; and how I have lacked it!"

To do him justice, he knew his wife's excitable nature, and was not without fears of some disaster, should the news be communicated to her unskilfully.

But this proposal of Falcon's made the way clearer. Mrs. Falcon, though not a lady, had all a lady's delicacy, and all a woman's tact and tenderness. He knew no one in the world more fit to be trusted with the delicate task of breaking to his Rosa that the grave, for once, was baffled, and her husband lived. He now became quite anxious for Falcon's departure, and ardently hoped that worthy had not deceived himself as to Mrs. Falcon's desire to visit England.

In short, it was settled that Falcon should start for Dale's Kloof, taking with him the diamonds, believed to be worth altogether three thousand pounds at Cape Town, and nearly as much again in England, and a long letter to Mrs. Falcon, in which Staines revealed his true story, told her where to find his wife, or hear of her, viz., at Kent Villa, Gravesend, and sketched an outline of instructions as to the way, and cunning degrees, by which the joyful news should be broken to her. With this he sent a long letter to be given to Rosa herself, but not till she should know all: and in this letter he enclosed the ruby ring she had given him. That ring had never left his finger, by sea or land, in sickness or health.

The letter to Rosa was sealed. The two letters made

quite a packet; for, in the letter to his beloved Rosa, he told her everything that had befallen him. It was a romance, and a picture of love; a letter to lift a loving woman to heaven, and almost reconcile her to all her bereaved heart had suffered.

This letter, written with many tears from the heart that had so suffered, and was now softened by good fortune and bounding with joy, Staines entrusted to Falcon, together with the other diamonds, and with many warm shakings of the hand, started him on his way.

"But mind, Falcon," said Christopher, "I shall expect an answer from Mrs. Falcon in twenty days at farthest. I do not feel so sure as you do that she wants to go to England; and, if not, I must write to Uncle Philip. Give me your solemn promise, old fellow, an answer in twenty days — if you have to send a Kafir on horseback."

"I give you my honor," said Falcon superbly.

"Send it to me at Bulteel's Farm."

"All right. 'Dr. Christie, Bulteel's Farm.'"

"Well — no. Why should I conceal my real name any longer from such friends as you and your wife? Christie is short for Christopher — that *is* my Christian name; but my surname is Staines. Write to 'Dr. Staines.'"

"Dr. Staines!"

"Yes. Did you ever hear of me?"

Falcon wore a strange look. "I almost think I have. Down at Gravesend, or somewhere."

"That is curious. Yes, I married my Rosa there; poor thing! God bless her; God comfort her. She thinks me dead."

His voice trembled, he grasped Falcon's cold hand till the latter winced again, and so they parted, and Falcon rode off muttering, "Dr. Staines! so then *you* are Dr. Staines."

CHAPTER XXII.

Rosa Staines had youth on her side, and it is an old saying that youth will not be denied. Youth struggled with death for her, and won the battle.

But she came out of that terrible fight weak as a child. The sweet pale face, the widow's cap, the suit of deep black — it was long ere these came down from the sick-room. And when they did, oh, the dead blank! The weary, listless life! The days spent in sighs, and tears, and desolation. Solitude! solitude! Her husband was gone, and a strange woman played the mother to her child before her eyes.

Uncle Philip was devotedly kind to her, and so was her father; but they could do nothing for her.

Months rolled on, and skinned the wound over. Months could not heal. Her boy became dearer and dearer, and it was from him came the first real drops of comfort, however feeble.

She used to read her lost one's diary every day, and worship, in deep sorrow, the mind she had scarcely respected until it was too late. She searched in his diary to find his will, and often she mourned that he had written on it so few things she could obey. Her desire to obey the dead, whom, living, she had often disobeyed, was really simple and touching. She would mourn to her father that there were so few commands to her in his diary. "But," said she, "memory brings me back his will in many things, and to obey is now the only sad comfort I have."

It was in this spirit she now forced herself to keep

accounts. No fear of her wearing stays now; no powder; no trimmings; no waste.

After the usual delay, her father told her she should instruct a solicitor to apply to the insurance company for the six thousand pounds. She refused with a burst of agony. "The price of his life," she screamed. "Never! I'd live on bread and water sooner than touch that vile money."

Her father remonstrated gently. But she was immovable. "No. It would be like consenting to his death."

Then Uncle Philip was sent for.

He set her child on her knee; and gave her a pen. "Come," said he, sternly, "be a woman, and do your duty to little Christie."

She kissed the boy, cried, and did her duty meekly. But when the money was brought her, she flew to Uncle Philip, and said, "There! there!" and threw it all before him, and cried as if her heart would break. He waited patiently, and asked her what he was to do with all that: invest it?

"Yes, yes; for my little Christie."

"And pay you the interest quarterly."

"Oh, no, no. Dribble us out a little as we want it. That is the way to be truly kind to a simpleton. I hate that word."

"And suppose I run off with it? Such confiding geese as you corrupt a man."

"I shall never corrupt you. Crusty people are the soul of honor."

"Crusty people!" cried Philip, affecting amazement. "What are they?"

She bit her lip and colored a little; but answered adroitly, "They are people that pretend not to have good hearts, but have the best in the world; far better ones than your smooth ones: that's crusty people."

"Very well," said Philip; "and I'll tell you what simpletons are. They are little transparent-looking creatures that look shallow, but are as deep as Old Nick, and make you love them in spite of your judgment. They are the most artful of their sex; for they always achieve its great object, to be loved — the very thing that clever women sometimes fail in."

"Well, and if we are not to be loved, why live at all — such useless things as I am?" said Rosa simply.

So Philip took charge of her money, and agreed to help her save money for her little Christopher. Poverty should never destroy him, as it had his father.

As months rolled on, she crept out into public a little; but always on foot, and a very little way from home.

Youth and sober life gradually restored her strength, but not her color, nor her buoyancy.

Yet she was perhaps more beautiful than ever; for a holy sorrow chastened and sublimed her features: it was now a sweet, angelic, pensive beauty, that interested every feeling person at a glance.

She would visit no one; but a twelvemonth after her bereavement, she received a few chosen visitors.

One day a young gentleman called, and sent up his card, "Lord Tadcaster," with a note from Lady Cicely Treherne, full of kindly feeling. Uncle Philip had reconciled her to Lady Cicely; but they had never met.

Mrs. Staines was much agitated at the very name of Lord Tadcaster; but she would not have missed seeing him for the world.

She received him with her beautiful eyes wide open, to drink in every lineament of one who had seen the last of her Christopher.

Tadcaster was wonderfully improved: he had grown six inches out at sea, and though still short, was not

diminutive; he was a small Apollo, a model of symmetry, and had an engaging, girlish beauty, redeemed from downright effeminacy by a golden mustache like silk, and a tanned cheek that became him wonderfully.

He seemed dazzled at first by Mrs. Staines, but murmured that Lady Cicely had told him to come, or he would not have ventured.

"Who can be so welcome to me as you?" said she, and the tears came thick in her eyes directly.

Soon, he hardly knew how, he found himself talking of Staines, and telling her what a favorite he was, and all the clever things he had done.

The tears streamed down her cheeks, but she begged him to go on telling her, and omit nothing.

He complied heartily, and was even so moved by the telling of his friend's virtues, and her tears and sobs, that he mingled his tears with hers. She rewarded him by giving him her hand as she turned away her tearful face to indulge the fresh burst of grief his sympathy evoked.

When he was leaving, she said, in her simple way, "Bless you"— "Come again," she said: "you have done a poor widow good."

Lord Tadcaster was so interested and charmed, he would gladly have come back next day to see her; but he restrained that extravagance, and waited a week.

Then he visited her again. He had observed the villa was not rich in flowers, and he took her down a magnificent bouquet, cut from his father's hot-houses. At sight of him, or at sight of it, or both, the color rose for once in her pale cheek, and her pensive face wore a sweet expression of satisfaction. She took his flowers, and thanked him for them, and for coming to see her.

Soon they got on the only topic she cared for, and, in the course of this second conversation, he took her into

his confidence, and told her he owed everything to Dr. Staines. "I was on the wrong road altogether, and he put me right. To tell you the truth, I used to disobey him now and then, while he was alive, and I was always the worse for it; now he is gone, I never disobey him. I have written down a lot of wise, kind things he said to me, and I never go against any one of them. I call it my book of oracles. Dear me, I might have brought it with me."

"Oh, yes! why didn't you?" rather reproachfully.

"I will bring it next time."

"Pray do."

Then she looked at him with her lovely swimming eyes, and said tenderly, "And so here is another that disobeyed him living, but obeys him dead. What will you think when I tell you that I, his wife, who now worship him when it is too late, often thwarted and vexed him when he was alive?"

"No, no. He told me you were an angel, and I believe it."

"An angel! a good-for-nothing, foolish woman, who sees everything too late."

"Nobody else should say so before me," said the little gentleman grandly. "I shall take *his* word before yours on this one subject. If ever there was an angel, you are one; and oh, what would I give if I could but say or do anything in the world to comfort you!"

"You can do nothing for *me*, dear, but come and see me often, and talk to me as you do — on the one sad theme my broken heart has room for."

This invitation delighted Lord Tadcaster, and the sweet word "dear," from her lovely lips, entered his heart, and ran through all his veins like some rapturous but dangerous elixir. He did not say to himself, "She is a widow with a child, feels old with grief, and looks

on me as a boy who has been kind to her." Such prudence and wariness were hardly to be expected from his age. He had admired her at first sight, very nearly loved her at their first interview, and now this sweet word opened a heavenly vista. The generous heart that beat in his small frame burned to console her with a life-long devotion and all the sweet offices of love.

He ordered his yacht to Gravesend — for he had become a sailor — and then he called on Mrs. Staines, and told her, with a sort of sheepish cunning, that now, as his yacht *happened* to be at Gravesend, he could come and see her very often. He watched her timidly, to see how she would take that proposition.

She said, with the utmost simplicity, "I'm very glad of it."

Then he produced his oracles; and she devoured them. Such precepts to Tadcaster as she could apply to her own case she instantly noted in her memory, and they became her law from that moment.

Then, in her simplicity, she said, "And I will show you some things, in his own handwriting, that may be good for you; but I can't show you the whole book: some of it is sacred from every eye but his wife's. His wife's? Ah me! his widow's."

Then she pointed out passages in the diary that she thought might be for his good; and he nestled to her side, and followed her white finger with loving eyes, and was in an elysium — which she would certainly have put a stop to at that time, had she divined it. But all wisdom does not come at once to an unguarded woman. Rosa Staines was wiser about her husband than she had been, but she had plenty to learn.

Lord Tadcaster anchored off Gravesend, and visited Mrs. Staines nearly every day. She received him with a pleasure that was not at all lively, but quite undis-

guised. He could not doubt his welcome; for once, when he came, she said to the servant, "Not at home," a plain proof she did not wish his visit to be cut short by any one else.

And so these visits and devoted attentions of every kind went on unobserved by Lord Tadcaster's friends, because Rosa would never go out, even with him; but at last Mr. Lusignan saw plainly how this would end, unless he interfered.

Well, he did not interfere; on the contrary, he was careful to avoid putting his daughter on her guard: he said to himself, "Lord Tadcaster does her good. I'm afraid she would not marry him, if he was to ask her now; but in time she might. She likes him a great deal better than any one else."

As for Philip, he was abroad for his own health, somewhat impaired by his long and faithful attendance on Rosa.

So now Lord Tadcaster was in constant attendance on Rosa. She was languid, but gentle and kind; and, as mourners, like invalids, are apt to be egotistical, she saw nothing but that he was a comfort to her in her affliction.

While matters were so, the Earl of Miltshire, who had long been sinking, died, and Tadcaster succeeded to his honors and estates.

Rosa heard of it, and, thinking it was a great bereavement, wrote him one of those exquisite letters of condolence a lady alone can write. He took it to Lady Cicely, and showed it her. She highly approved it.

He said, "The only thing — it makes me ashamed, I do not feel my poor father's death more; but you know it has been so long expected." Then he was silent a long time; and then he asked her if such a woman as that would not make him happy, if he could win her.

It was on her ladyship's tongue to say, "She did not

make her first happy;" but she forbore, and said coldly, that was maw than she could say.

Tadcaster seemed disappointed by that, and by and by Cicely took herself to task. She asked herself what were Tadcaster's chances in the lottery of wives. The heavy army of scheming mothers, and the light cavalry of artful daughters, rose before her cousinly and disinterested eyes, and she asked herself what chance poor little Tadcaster would have of catching a true love, with a hundred female artists manœuvring, wheeling, ambuscading, and charging upon his wealth and titles. She returned to the subject of her own accord, and told him she saw but one objection to such a match: the lady had a son by a man of rare merit and misfortune. Could he, at his age, undertake to be a father to that son? "Othahwise," said Lady Cicely, "mark my words, you will quall over that poor child; and you will have two to quall with, because I shall be on her side."

Tadcaster declared to her that child should be quite the opposite of a bone of contention. "I have thought of that," said he, "and I mean to be so kind to that boy, I shall *make* her love me for that."

On these terms Lady Cicely gave her consent.

Then he asked her should he write, or ask her in person.

Lady Cicely reflected. "If you write, I think she will say no."

"But if I go?"

"Then, it will depend on how you do it. Rosa Staines is a true mourner. Whatever you may think, I don't believe the idea of a second union has ever entered her head. But then she is very unselfish: and she likes you better than any one else, I dare say. I don't think your title or your money will weigh with her now. But, if you show her your happiness depends on it, she may,

perhaps, cwy and sob at the very idea of it, and then, after all, say, 'Well, why not — if I can make the poor soul happy?'"

So, on this advice, Tadcaster went down to Gravesend, and Lady Cicely felt a certain self-satisfaction; for, her well-meant interference having lost Rosa one husband, she was pleased to think she had done something to give her another.

Lord Tadcaster came to Rosa Staines; he found her seated with her head upon her white hand, thinking sadly of the past.

At sight of him in deep mourning, she started, and said, "Oh!"

Then she said tenderly, "We are of one color now," and gave him her hand.

He sat down beside her, not knowing how to begin.

"I am not Tadcaster now. I am Earl of Miltshire."

"Ah, yes; I forgot," said she indifferently.

"This is my first visit to any one in that character."

"Thank you."

"It is an awfully important visit to me. I could not feel myself independent, and able to secure your comfort and little Christie's, without coming to the lady, the only lady I ever saw, that — oh, Mrs. Staines — Rosa — who could see you, as I have done — mingle his tears with yours, as I have done, and not love you, and long to offer you his love?"

"Love! to me, a broken-hearted woman, with nothing to live for but his memory and his child."

She looked at him with a sort of scared amazement.

"His child shall be mine. His memory is almost as dear to me as to you."

"Nonsense, child, nonsense!" said she, almost sternly.

"Was he not my best friend? Should I have the health I enjoy, or even be alive, but for him? Oh, Mrs.

Staines — Rosa, you will not live all your life unmarried; and who will love you as I do? You are my first and only love. My happiness depends on you."

"Your happiness depend on me! Heaven forbid — a woman of my age, that feels so old, old, old."

"You are not old; you are young, and sad, and beautiful, and my happiness depends on you." She began to tremble a little. Then he kneeled at her knees, and implored her, and his hot tears fell upon the hand she put out to stop him, while she turned her head away, and the tears began to run.

Oh! never can the cold dissecting pen tell what rushes over the heart that has loved and lost, when another true love first kneels and implores for love, or pity, or anything the bereaved can give.

CHAPTER XXIII.

When Falcon went, luck seemed to desert their claim; day after day went by without a find; and the discoveries on every side made this the more mortifying.

By this time the diggers at Bulteel's pan were as miscellaneous as the audience at Drury Lane Theatre, only mixed more closely; the gallery folk and the stalls worked cheek by jowl. Here a gentleman with an affected lisp, and close by an honest fellow, who could not deliver a sentence without an oath, or some still more horrible expletive that meant nothing at all in reality, but served to make respectable flesh creep: interspersed with these, Hottentots, Kafirs, and wild blue blacks gayly clad in an ostrich feather, a scarlet ribbon, and a Tower musket sold them by some good Christian for a modern rifle.

On one side of Staines were two swells, who lay on their backs and talked opera half the day, but seldom condescended to work without finding a diamond of some sort.

After a week's deplorable luck, his Kafir boy struck work on account of a sore in his leg; the sore was due to a very common cause, the burning sand had got into a scratch, and festered. Staines, out of humanity, examined the sore; and proceeding to clean it, before bandaging, out popped a diamond worth forty pounds, even in the depreciated market. Staines quietly pocketed it, and bandaged the leg. This made him suspect his blacks had been cheating him on a large scale, and he borrowed Hans Bulteel to watch them, giving him a

third, with which Master Hans was mightily pleased. But they could only find small diamonds, and by this time prodigious slices of luck were reported on every side. Kafirs and Boers that would not dig, but traversed large tracts of ground when the sun was shining, stumbled over diamonds. One Boer pointed to a wagon and eight oxen, and said that one lucky glance on the sand had given him that lot: but day after day Staines returned home, covered with dust, and almost blinded, yet with little or nothing to show for it.

One evening, complaining of his change of luck, Bulteel quietly proposed to him migration. "I am going," said he resignedly: "and you can come with me."

"You leave your farm, sir? Why, they pay you ten shillings a claim, and that must make a large return; the pan is fifteen acres."

"Yes, mine vriend," said the poor Hollander, "they pay; but deir money it cost too dear. Vere is mine peace? Dis farm is six tousand acres. If de cursed diamonds was farther off, den it vas vell. But dey are too near. Once I could smoke in peace, and zleep. Now diamonds is come, and zleep and peace is fled. Dere is four tousand tents, and to each tent a dawg; dat dawg bark at four tousand other dawgs all night, and dey bark at him and at each oder. Den de masters of de dawgs dey get angry, and fire four tousand pistole at de four tousand dawgs, and make my bed shake wid the trembling of mine vrow. My vamily is with diamonds infected. Dey vill not vork. Dey takes long valks, and always looks on de ground. Mine childre shall be hump-backed, round-shouldered, looking down for diamonds. Dey shall forget Gott. He is on high: dere eyes are always on de earth. De diggers found a diamond in mine plaster of mine wall of mine house. Dat plaster vas limestone; it come from dose kopjes de good Gott made in

His anger against man for his vickedness. I zay so. Dey not believe me. Dey tink dem abominable stones grow in mine house, and break out in mine plaster like de measle: dey vaunt to dig in mine wall, in mine garden, in mine floor. One day dey shall dig in mine body. I vill go. Better I love peace dan money. Here is English company make me offer for mine varm. Dey forgive de diamonds."

"You have not accepted it?" cried Staines in alarm.

"No, but I vill. I have said I shall tink of it. Dat is my vay. So I say yah."

"An English company? They will cheat you without mercy. No, they shall not, though, for I will have a hand in the bargain."

He set to work directly, added up the value of the claims, at ten shillings per month, and amazed the poor Hollander by his statement of the value of those fifteen acres, capitalized.

And to close this part of the subject, the obnoxious diamonds obtained him three times as much as his father had given for the whole six thousand acres.

The company got a great bargain, but Bulteel received what for him was a large capital, and settling far to the south, this lineal descendant of *le philosophe sans le savoir* carried his godliness, his cleanliness, and his love of peace, out of the turmoil, and was happier than ever, since now he could compare his placid existence with one year of noise and clamor.

But long before this, events more pertinent to my story had occurred.

One day, a Hottentot came into Bulteel's farm and went out among the diggers, till he found Staines. The Hottentot was one employed at Dale's Kloof, and knew him. He brought Staines a letter.

Staines opened the letter, and another letter fell out; it was directed to "Reginald Falcon, Esq."

"Why," thought Staines, "what a time this letter must have been on the road! So much for private messengers."

The letter ran thus: —

Dear Sir, — This leaves us all well at Dale's Kloof, as I hope it shall find you and my dear husband at the diggings. Sir, I am happy to say I have good news for you. When you got well by God's mercy, I wrote to the doctor at the hospital and told him so. I wrote unbeknown to you, because I had promised him. Well, sir, he has written back to say you have two hundred pounds in money, and a great many valuable things, such as gold and jewels. They are all at the old bank in Cape Town, and the cashier has seen you, and will deliver them on demand. So that is the first of my good news, because it is good news to you. But, dear sir, I think you will be pleased to hear that Dick and I are thriving wonderfully, thanks to your good advice. The wooden house it is built, and a great oven. But, sir, the traffic came almost before we were ready, and the miners that call here, coming and going, every day, you would not believe, likewise wagons and carts. It is all bustle, morn till night, and dear Reginald will never be dull here now; I hope you will be so kind as tell him so, for I do long to see you both home again.

Sir, we are making our fortunes. The grain we could not sell at a fair price, we sell as bread, and higher than in England ever so much. Tea and coffee the same; and the poor things praise us, too, for being so moderate. So, sir, Dick bids me say that we owe this to you, and if so be you are minded to share, why nothing would please us better. Head-piece is always worth money in these parts; and if it hurts your pride to be our partner without money, why you can throw in what you have at the Cape, though we don't ask that. And, besides, we are offered diamonds a bargain every day, but are afraid to deal, for want of experience; but if you were in it with us, you must know them well by this time, and we might turn many a good pound that way. Dear sir, I hope you will not be offended, but I think this is the only way we have, Dick and I, to show our respect and good-will.

Dear sir, digging is hard work, and not fit for you and Reginald, that are gentlemen, amongst a lot of rough fellows, that their talk makes my hair stand on end, though I dare say they mean no harm.

Your bedroom is always ready, sir. I never will let it to any of them, hoping now to see you every day. You that know everything, can guess how I long to see you both home. My very good fortune seems not to taste like good fortune, without those I love and esteem to share it. I shall count how many days this letter will take to reach you, and then I shall pray for your safety harder than ever, till the blessed hour comes when I see my husband, and my good friend, never to part again, I hope, in this world.

I am sir, your dutiful servant and friend,

PHŒBE DALE.

P.S. There is regular travelling to and from Cape Town, and a post now to Pniel, but I thought it surest to send by one that knows you.

Staines read this letter with great satisfaction. He remembered his two hundred pounds, but his gold and jewels puzzled him. Still it was good news, and pleased him not a little. Phœbe's good fortune gratified him too, and her offer of a partnership, especially in the purchase of diamonds from returning diggers. He saw a large fortune to be made; and wearied and disgusted with recent ill-luck, blear-eyed and almost blinded with sorting in the blazing sun, he resolved to go at once to Dale's Kloof. Should Mrs. Falcon be gone to England with the diamonds, he would stay there, and Rosa should come out to him, or he would go and fetch her.

He went home, and washed himself, and told Bulteel he had had good news, and should leave the diggings at once. He gave him up the claim, and told him to sell it by auction. It was worth two hundred pounds still. The good people sympathized with him, and he started within an hour. He left his pickaxe and shovel, and

took only his double rifle, an admirable one, some ammunition, including conical bullets and projectile shells given him by Falcon, a bag full of carbuncles and garnets he had collected for Ucatella, a few small diamonds, and one hundred pounds, — all that remained to him, since he had been paying wages and other things for months, and had given Falcon twenty for his journey.

He rode away and soon put twenty miles between him and the diggings.

He came to a little store that bought diamonds and sold groceries and tobacco. He haltered his horse to a hook, and went in. He offered a small diamond for sale. The master was out, and the assistant said there was a glut of these small stones, he did not care to give money for it.

"Well, give me three dozen cigars."

While they were chaffering, in walked a Hottentot, and said, "Will you buy this?" and laid a clear, glittering stone on the counter, as large as a walnut.

"Yes," said the young man. "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds."

"Two hundred pounds! Let us look at it;" he examined it, and said he thought it was a diamond, but these large stones were so deceitful, he dared not give two hundred pounds. "Come again in an hour," said he, "then the master will be in."

"No," said the Hottentot quietly, and walked out.

Staines, who had been literally perspiring at the sight of this stone, mounted his horse and followed the man. When he came up to him, he asked leave to examine the gem. The Hottentot quietly assented.

Staines looked at it all over. It had a rough side and a polished side, and the latter was of amazing softness and lustre. It made him tremble. He said, "Look here, I have only one hundred pounds in my pocket."

The Hottentot shook his head.

"But if you will go back with me to Bulteel's farm, I'll borrow the other hundred."

The Hottentot declined, and told him he could get four hundred pounds for it by going back to Pniel. "But," said he, "my face is turned so; and when Squat turn his face so, he going home. Not can bear go the other way then," and he held out his hand for the diamond.

Staines gave it him, and was in despair at seeing such a prize so near, yet leaving him.

He made one more effort. "Well, but," said he, "how far are you going this way?"

"Ten days."

"Why, so am I. Come with me to Dale's Kloof, and I will give the other hundred. See, I am in earnest, for here is one hundred, at all events."

Staines made this proposal, trembling with excitement. To his surprise and joy, the Hottentot assented, though with an air of indifference; and on these terms they became fellow-travellers, and Staines gave him a cigar. They went on side by side, and halted for the night forty miles from Bulteel's farm.

They slept in a Boer's out-house, and the vrow was civil, and lent Staines a jackal's skin. In the morning he bought it for a diamond, a carbuncle, and a score of garnets; for a horrible thought had occurred to him, if they stopped at any place where miners were, somebody might buy the great diamond over his head. This fear, and others, grew on him, and with all his philosophy he went on thorns, and was the slave of the diamond.

He resolved to keep his Hottentot all to himself if possible. He shot a springbok that crossed the road, and they roasted a portion of the animal, and the Hottentot carried some on with him.

Seeing he admired the rifle, Staines offered it him for

the odd hundred pounds; but though Squat's eye glittered a moment, he declined.

Finding that they met too many diggers and carts, Staines asked his Hottentot was there no nearer way to reach that star, pointing to one he knew was just over Dale's Kloof.

Oh, yes, he knew a nearer way, where there were trees, and shade, and grass, and many beasts to shoot.

"Let us take that way," said Staines.

The Hottentot, ductile as wax, except about the price of the diamond, assented calmly; and next day they diverged, and got into forest scenery, and their eyes were soothed with green glades here and there, wherever the clumps of trees sheltered the grass from the panting sun. Animals abounded, and were tame. Staines, an excellent marksman, shot the Hottentot his supper without any trouble.

Sleeping in the wood, with not a creature near but Squat, a sombre thought struck Staines. Suppose this Hottentot should assassinate him for his money, who would ever know? The thought was horrible, and he awoke with a start ten times that night. The Hottentot slept like a stone, and never feared for his own life and precious booty. Staines was compelled to own to himself he had less faith in human goodness than the savage had. He said to himself, "He is my superior. He is the master of this dreadful diamond, and I am its slave."

Next day they went on till noon, and then they halted at a really delightful spot; a silver kloof ran along a bottom, and there was a little clump of three acacia-trees that lowered their long tresses, pining for the stream, and sometimes getting a cool grateful kiss from it when the water was high.

They halted the horse, bathed in the stream, and lay luxurious under the acacias. All was delicious languor and enjoyment of life.

The Hottentot made a fire, and burnt the remains of a little sort of kangaroo Staines had shot him the evening before; but it did not suffice his maw, and looking about him, he saw three elands leisurely feeding about three hundred yards off. They were cropping the rich herbage close to the shelter of a wood.

The Hottentot suggested that this was an excellent opportunity. He would borrow Staines's rifle, steal into the wood, crawl on his belly close up to them, and send a bullet through one.

Staines did not relish the proposal. He had seen the savage's eye repeatedly gloat on the rifle, and was not without hopes he might even yet relent, and give the great diamond for the hundred pounds and this rifle; and he was so demoralized by the diamond, and filled with suspicion, that he feared the savage, if he once had the rifle in his possession, might levant, and be seen no more, in which case he, Staines, still the slave of the diamond, might hang himself on the nearest tree, and so secure his Rosa the insurance money, at all events. In short, he had really diamond on the brain.

He hem'd and haw'd a little at Squat's proposal, and then got out of it by saying, "That is not necessary. I can shoot it from here."

"It is too far," objected Blacky.

"Too far! This is an Enfield rifle. I could kill the poor beast at three times that distance."

Blacky was amazed. "An Enfield rifle," said he, in the soft musical murmur of his tribe, which is the one charm of the poor Hottentot; "and shoot three times *so* far."

"Yes," said Christopher. Then, seeing his companion's hesitation, he conceived a hope. "If I kill that eland from here, will you give me the diamond for my horse and the wonderful rifle? — no Hottentot has such a rifle."

Squat became cold directly. "The price of the diamond is two hundred pounds."

Staines groaned with disappointment, and thought to himself with rage, "Anybody but me would club the rifle, give the obstinate black brute a stunner, and take the diamond — God forgive me!"

Says the Hottentot cunningly, "I can't think so far as white man. Let me see the eland dead, and then I shall know how far the rifle shoot."

"Very well," said Staines. But he felt sure the savage only wanted his meal, and would never part with the diamond, except for the odd money.

However, he loaded his left barrel with one of the explosive projectiles Falcon had given him; it was a little fulminating shell with a steel point. It was with this barrel he had shot the murcat overnight, and he had found he shot better with this barrel than the other. He loaded his left barrel then, saw the powder well up, capped it and cut away a strip of the acacia with his knife to see clear, and lying down in volunteer fashion, elbow on ground, drew his bead steadily on an eland who presented him her broadside, her back being turned to the wood. The sun shone on her soft coat, and never was a fairer mark, the sportsman's deadly eye being in the cool shade, the animal in the sun.

He aimed long and steadily. But just as he was about to pull the trigger, Mind interposed, and he lowered the deadly weapon. "Poor creature!" he said, "I am going to take her life — for what? for a single meal. She is as big as a pony; and I am to lay her carcass on the plain, that we may eat two pounds of it. This is how the weasel kills the rabbit; sucks an ounce of blood for his food, and wastes the rest. So the demoralized sheep-dog tears out the poor creature's kidneys, and wastes the rest. Man, armed by science with such powers of slay-

ing, should be less egotistical than weasels and perverted sheep-dogs. I will not kill her. I will not lay that beautiful body of hers low, and glaze those tender, loving eyes that never gleamed with hate or rage at man, and fix those innocent jaws that never bit the life out of anything, not even of the grass she feeds on, and does it more good than harm. Feed on, poor innocent. And you be blanked; you and your diamond, that I begin to wish I had never seen; for it would corrupt an angel."

Squat understood one word in ten, but he managed to reply. "This is nonsense-talk," said he, gravely. "The life is no bigger in that than in the murcat you shot last shoot."

"No more it is," said Staines. "I am a fool. It is come to this, then; Kafirs teach us theology, and Hottentots morality. I bow to my intellectual superior. I'll shoot the eland." He raised his rifle again.

"No, no, no, no, no, no," murmured the Hottentot, in a sweet voice scarcely audible, yet so keen in its entreaty, that Staines turned hastily round to look at him. His face was ashy, his teeth chattering, his limbs shaking. Before Staines could ask him what was the matter, he pointed through an aperture of the acacias into the wood hard by the elands. Staines looked, and saw what seemed to him like a very long dog, or some such animal, crawling from tree to tree. He did not at all share the terror of his companion, nor understand it. But a terrible explanation followed. This creature, having got to the skirt of the wood, expanded, by some strange magic, to an incredible size, and sprang into the open, with a growl, a mighty lion; he seemed to ricochet from the ground, so immense was his second bound, that carried him to the eland, and he struck her one blow on the head with his terrible paw, and felled her as if with a thunderbolt: down went her body, with all the legs

doubled, and her poor head turned over, and the nose kissed the ground. The lion stood motionless. Presently the eland, who was not dead, but stunned, began to recover and struggle feebly up. Then the lion sprang on her with a roar, and rolled her over, and with two tremendous bites and a shake, tore her entrails out and laid her dying. He sat composedly down, and contemplated her last convulsions, without touching her again.

At this roar, though not loud, the horse, though he had never heard or seen a lion, trembled, and pulled at his halter.

Blacky crept into the water; and Staines was struck with such an awe as he had never felt. Nevertheless, the king of beasts being at a distance, and occupied, and Staines a brave man, and out of sight, he kept his ground and watched, and by those means saw a sight never to be forgotten. The lion rose up, and stood in the sun incredibly beautiful as well as terrible. He was not the mangy hue of the caged lion, but a skin tawny, golden, glossy as a race-horse, and of exquisite tint that shone like pure gold in the sun; his eye a lustrous jewel of richest hue, and his mane sublime. He looked towards the wood, and uttered a full roar. This was so tremendous that the horse shook all over as if in an ague, and began to lather. Staines recoiled, and his flesh crept, and the Hottentot went under water, and did not emerge for ever so long.

After a pause, the lion roared again, and all the beasts and birds of prey seemed to know the meaning of that terrible roar. Till then the place had been a solitude, but now it began to fill in the strangest way, as if the lord of the forest could call all his subjects together with a trumpet roar: first came two lion cubs, to whom, in fact, the roar had been addressed. The lion rubbed himself several times against the eland, but did not eat

a morsel, and the cubs went in and feasted on the prey. The lion politely and paternally drew back, and watched the young people enjoying themselves.

Meantime approached, on tiptoe, jackals and hyenas, but dared not come too near. Slate-colored vultures settled at a little distance, but not a soul dared interfere with the cubs; they saw the lion was acting sentinel, and they knew better than come near.

After a time, papa feared for the digestion of those brats, or else his own mouth watered; for he came up, knocked them head over heels with his velvet paw, and they took the gentle hint, and ran into the wood double quick.

Then the lion began tearing away at the eland, and bolting huge morsels greedily. This made the rabble's mouth water. The hyenas, and jackals, and vultures formed a circle ludicrous to behold, and that circle kept narrowing as the lion tore away at his prey. They increased in number, and at last hunger overcame prudence; the rear rank shoved on the front, as amongst men, and a general attack seemed imminent.

Then the lion looked up at these invaders, uttered a reproachful growl, and went at them, patting them right and left, and knocking them over. He never touched a vulture, nor indeed did he kill an animal. He was a lion, and only killed to eat; yet he soon cleared the place, because he knocked over a few hyenas and jackals, and the rest, being active, tumbled over the vultures before they could spread their heavy wings. After this warning, they made a respectful circle again, through which, in due course, the gorged lion stalked into the wood.

A savage's sentiments change quickly, and the Hottentot, fearing little from a full lion, was now giggling at Staines's side. Staines asked him which he thought was the lord of all creatures, a man or a lion.

"A lion," said Blacky, amazed at such a shallow question.

Staines now got up, and proposed to continue their journey. But Blacky was for waiting till the lion was gone to sleep after his meal.

While they discussed the question, the lion burst out of the wood within hearing of their voices, as his pricked-up ears showed, and made straight for them at a distance of scarcely thirty yards.

Now, the chances are, the lion knew nothing about them, and only came to drink at the kloof, after his meal, and perhaps lie under the acacias: but who can think calmly, when his first lion bursts out on him a few paces off? Staines shouldered his rifle, took a hasty, flurried aim, and sent a bullet at him.

If he had missed him, perhaps the report might have turned the lion; but he wounded him, and not mortally. Instantly the enraged beast uttered a terrific roar, and came at him with his mane distended with rage, his eyes glaring, his mouth open, and his whole body dilated with fury.

At that terrible moment, Staines recovered his wits enough to see that what little chance he had was to fire into the destroyer, not at him. He kneeled, and levelled at the centre of the lion's chest, and not till he was within five yards did he fire. Through the smoke he saw the lion in the air above him, and rolled shrieking into the stream and crawled like a worm under the bank, by one motion, and there lay trembling. A few seconds of sick stupor passed: all was silent. Had the lion lost him? Was it possible he might yet escape?

All was silent.

He listened, in agony, for the sniffing of the lion, puzzling him out by scent.

No: all was silent.

NOT TILL HE WAS WITHIN FIVE YARDS DID HE FIRE.

Staines looked round, and saw a woolly head, and two saucer eyes and open nostrils close by him. It was the Hottentot, more dead than alive.

Staines whispered him, "I think he is gone."

The Hottentot whispered, "Gone a little way to watch. He is wise as well as strong." With this he disappeared beneath the water.

Still no sound but the screaming of the vultures, and snarling of the hyenas and jackals over the eland.

"Take a look," said Staines.

"Yes," said Squat; "but not to-day. Wait here a day or two. Den he forget and forgive."

Now Staines, having seen the lion lie down and watch the dying eland, was a great deal impressed by this; and as he had now good hopes of saving his life, he would not throw away a chance. He kept his head just above water, and never moved.

In this freezing situation they remained.

Presently there was a rustling that made both crouch.

It was followed by a croaking noise.

Christopher made himself small.

The Hottentot, on the contrary, raised his head, and ventured a little way into the stream.

By these means he saw it was something very foul, but not terrible. It was a large vulture that had settled on the very top of the nearest acacia.

At this the Hottentot got bolder still, and to the great surprise of Staines began to crawl cautiously into some rushes, and through them up the bank.

The next moment he burst into a mixture of yelling and chirping and singing, and other sounds so manifestly jubilant, that the vulture flapped heavily away, and Staines emerged in turn, but very cautiously.

Could he believe his eyes? There lay the lion, dead as a stone, on his back, with his four legs in the air, like

wooden legs, they were so very dead: and the valiant Squat, dancing about him, and on him, and over him.

Staines, unable to change his sentiments so quickly, eyed even the dead body of the royal beast with awe and wonder. What! had he already laid that terrible monarch low, and with a tube made in a London shop by men who never saw a lion spring, nor heard his awful roar shake the air? He stood with his heart still beating, and said not a word. The shallow Hottentot whipped out a large knife, and began to skin the king of beasts. Staines wondered he could so profane that masterpiece of nature. He felt more inclined to thank God for so great a preservation, and then pass reverently on, and leave the dead king undesecrated.

He was roused from his solemn thoughts by the reflection that there might be a lioness about, since there were cubs: he took a piece of paper, emptied his remaining powder into it, and proceeded to dry it in the sun. This was soon done, and then he loaded both barrels.

By this time the adroit Hottentot had flayed the carcass sufficiently to reveal the mortal injury. The projectile had entered the chest, and slanting upwards, had burst among the vitals, reducing them to a gory pulp. The lion must have died in the air, when he bounded on receiving the fatal shot.

The Hottentot uttered a cry of admiration. "Not the lion king of all, nor even the white man," he said; "but Enfeel rifle!"

Staines's eyes glittered. "You shall have it, and the horse, for your diamond," said he eagerly.

The black seemed a little shaken; but did not reply. He got out of it by going on with his lion; and Staines eyed him, and was bitterly disappointed at not getting the diamond even on these terms. He began to feel he should never get it: they were near the high-road; he

could not keep the Hottentot to himself much longer. He felt sick at heart. He had wild and wicked thoughts; half hoped the lioness would come and kill the Hottentot, and liberate the jewel that possessed his soul.

At last the skin was off, and the Hottentot said, "Me take this to my kraal, and dey all say, 'Squat a great shooter; kill um lion.'"

Then Staines saw another chance for him, and summoned all his address for a last effort. "No, Squat," said he, "that skin belongs to me. I shot the lion, with the only rifle that can kill a lion like a cat. Yet you would not give me a diamond — a paltry stone for it. No, Squat, if you were to go into your village with that lion's skin, why the old men would bend their heads to you, and say, 'Great is Squat! He killed the lion, and wears his skin.' The young women would all fight which should be the wife of Squat. Squat would be king of the village."

Squat's eyes began to roll.

"And shall I give the skin, and the glory that is my due, to an ill-natured fellow, who refuses me his paltry diamond for a good horse — look at him — and for the rifle that kills lions like rabbits — behold it; and a hundred pounds in good gold and Dutch notes — see; and for the lion's skin, and glory, and honor, and a rich wife, and to be king of Africa? Never!"

The Hottentot's hands and toes began to work convulsively. "Good master, Squat ask pardon. Squat was blind. Squat will give the diamond, the great diamond of Africa, for the lion's skin, and the king rifle, and the little horse, and the gold, and Dutch notes every one of them. Dat make just two hundred pounds."

"More like four hundred," cried Staines very loud. "And how do I know it is a diamond? These large stones are the most deceitful. Show it me, this instant," said he imperiously.

"Iss, master," said the crushed Hottentot, with the voice of a mouse, and put the stone into his hand with a child-like faith that almost melted Staines; but he saw he must be firm. "Where did you find it?" he bawled.

"Master," said poor Squat, in deprecating tones, "my little master at the farm wanted plaster. He send to Bulteel's pan; dere was large lumps. Squat say to miners, 'May we take de large lumps? Dey say, 'Yes; take de cursed lumps we no can break.' We took de cursed lumps. We ride 'em in de cart to farm twenty milses. I beat 'em with my hammer. Dey is very hard. More dey break my heart dan I break their cursed heads. One day I use strong words, like white man, and I hit one large lump too hard; he break, and out come de white clear stone. Iss, him diamond. Long time we know him in our kraal, because he hard. Long time before ever white man know him, tousand years ago, we find him, and he make us lilly hole in big stone for make wheat dust. Him a diamond, blank my eyes!"

This was intended as a solemn form of asseveration adapted to the white man's habits.

Yes, reader, he told the truth; and strange to say, the miners knew the largest stones were in these great lumps of carbonate, but then the lumps were so cruelly hard, they lost all patience with them, and so, finding it was no use to break some of them, and not all, they rejected them all, with curses; and thus this great stone was carted away as rubbish from the mine, and found, like a toad in a hole, by Squat.

"Well," said Christopher, "after all, you are an honest fellow, and I think I will buy it; but first you must show me out of this wood; I am not going to be eaten alive in it for want of the king of rifles."

Squat assented eagerly, and they started at once.

They passed the skeleton of the eland; its very bones were polished, and its head carried into the wood; and looking back they saw vultures busy on the lion. They soon cleared the wood.

Squat handed Staines the diamond — when it touched his hand, as his own, a bolt of ice seemed to run down his back, and hot water to follow it — and the money, horse, rifle, and skin were made over to Squat.

"Shake hands over it, Squat," said Staines; "you are hard, but you are honest."

"Iss, master, I a good much hard and honest," said Squat.

"Good-by, old fellow."

"Good-by, master."

And Squat strutted away, with the halter in his hand, horse following him, rifle under his arm, and the lion's skin over his shoulders, and the tail trailing, a figure sublime in his own eyes, ridiculous in creation's. So vanity triumphed, even in the wilds of Africa.

Staines hurried forward on foot, loading his revolver as he went, for the very vicinity of the wood alarmed him now that he had parted with his trusty rifle.

That night he lay down on the open veldt, in his jackal's skin, with no weapon but his revolver, and woke with a start a dozen times. Just before daybreak he scanned the stars carefully, and noting exactly where the sun rose, made a rough guess at his course, and followed it till the sun was too hot; then he crept under a ragged bush, hung up his jackal's skin, and sweated there, parched with thirst, and gnawed with hunger. When it was cooler, he crept on, and found water, but no food. He was in torture, and began to be frightened, for he was in a desert. He found an ostrich egg and ate it ravenously.

Next day, hunger took a new form, faintness. He

could not walk for it; his jackal's skin oppressed him; he lay down exhausted. A horror seized his dejected soul. The diamond! It would be his death. No man must so long for any earthly thing as he had for this glittering traitor. "Oh! my good horse! my trusty rifle!" he cried. "For what have I thrown you away? For starvation. Misers have been found stretched over their gold; and some day my skeleton will be found, and nothing to tell the base death I died of and deserved; nothing but the cursed diamond. Ay, fiend, glare in my eyes, do!" He felt delirium creeping over him; and at that a new terror froze him. His reason, that he had lost once, was he to lose it again? He prayed; he wept; he dozed, and forgot all. When he woke again, a cool air was fanning his cheeks; it revived him a little; it became almost a breeze.

And this breeze, as it happened, carried on its wings the curse of Africa. There loomed in the north-west a cloud of singular density, that seemed to expand in size as it drew nearer, yet to be still more solid, and darken the air. It seemed a dust-storm. Staines took out his handkerchief, prepared to wrap his face in it, not to be stifled.

But soon there was a whirring and a whizzing, and hundreds of locusts flew over his head; they were followed by thousands, the swiftest of the mighty host. They thickened and thickened, till the air looked solid, and even that glaring sun was blackened by the rushing mass. Birds of all sorts whirled above, and swooped among them. They peppered Staines all over like shot. They stuck in his beard, and all over him; they clogged the bushes, carpeted the ground, while the darkened air sang as with the whirl of machinery. Every bird in the air, and beast of the field, granivorous or carnivorous, was gorged with them; and to these animals was added

man, for Staines, being famished, and remembering the vrow Bulteel, lighted a fire, and roasted a handful or two on a flat stone; they were delicious. The fire once lighted, they cooked themselves, for they kept flying into it. Three hours, without interruption, did they darken nature, and, before the column ceased, all the beasts of the field came after, gorging them so recklessly, that Staines could have shot an antelope dead with his pistol within a yard of him.

But to tell the horrible truth, the cooked locusts were so nice that he preferred to gorge on them along with the other animals.

He roasted another lot, for future use, and marched on with a good heart.

But now he got on some rough, scrubby ground, and damaged his shoes, and tore his trousers.

This lasted a terrible distance; but at the end of it came the usual arid ground; and at last he came upon the track of wheels and hoofs. He struck it at an acute angle, and that showed him he had made a good line. He limped along it a little way, slowly, being footsore.

By and by, looking back, he saw a lot of rough fellows swaggering along behind him. Then he was alarmed, terribly alarmed, for his diamond; he tore a strip of his handkerchief, and tied the stone cunningly under his armpit as he hobbled on.

The men came up with him.

"Hallo, mate! Come from the diggings?"

"Yes."

"What luck?"

"Very good."

"Haw! haw! What! found a fifty-carat? Show it us."

"We found five big stones, my mate and me. He is gone to Cape Town to sell them. I had no luck when

he had left me, so I have cut it; going to turn farmer. Can you tell me how far it is to Dale's Kloof?"

No, they could not tell him that. They swung on; and, to Staines, their backs were a cordial, as we say in Scotland.

However, his travels were near an end. Next morning he saw Dale's Kloof in the distance; and as soon as the heat moderated, he pushed on, with one shoe and tattered trousers; and half an hour before sunset he hobbled up to the place.

It was all bustle. Travellers at the door; their wagons and carts under a long shed.

Ucatella was the first to see him coming, and came and fawned on him with delight. Her eyes glistened, her teeth gleamed. She patted both his cheeks, and then his shoulders, and even his knees, and then flew in-doors crying, "My doctor child is come home!" This amused three travellers, and brought out Dick, with a hearty welcome.

"But Lordsake, sir, why have you come afoot; and a rough road too? Look at your shoes. Hallo! What is come of the horse?"

"I exchanged him for a diamond."

"The deuce you did! And the rifle?"

"Exchanged that for the same diamond."

"It ought to be a big 'un."

"It is."

Dick made a wry face. "Well, sir, you know best. You are welcome, on horse or afoot. You are just in time; Phœbe and me are just sitting down to dinner."

He took him into a little room they had built for their own privacy, for they liked to be quiet now and then, being country bred; and Phœbe was putting their dinner on the table, when Staines limped in.

She gave a joyful cry, and turned red all over. "Oh,

doctor!" Then his travel-torn appearance struck her. "But, dear heart! what a figure! Where's Reginald? Oh, he's not far off, *I* know."

And she flung open the window, and almost flew through it in a moment, to look for her husband.

"Reginald?" said Staines. Then turning to Dick Dale, "Why, he is here — isn't he?"

"No, sir: not without he is just come with you."

"With me?— no. You know we parted at the diggings. Come, Mr. Dale, he may not be here now; but he has been here. He must have been here."

Phœbe, who had not lost a word, turned round, with all her high color gone, and her cheeks getting paler and paler. "Oh, Dick! what is this?"

"I don't understand it," said Dick. "Whatever made you think he was here, sir?"

"Why, I tell you he left me to come here."

"Left you, sir!" faltered Phœbe. "Why, when? — where?"

"At the diggings — ever so long ago."

"Blank him! that is just like him; the uneasy fool!" roared Dick.

"No, Mr. Dale, you should not say that; he left me, with my consent, to come to Mrs. Falcon here, and consult her about disposing of our diamonds."

"Diamonds! — diamonds!" cried Phœbe. "Oh, they make me tremble. How *could* you let him go alone! You didn't let *him* go on foot, I hope?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Falcon; he had his horse, and his rifle, and money to spend on the road."

"How long ago did he leave you, sir?"

"I — I am sorry to say it was five weeks ago."

"Five weeks! and not come yet. Ah! the wild beasts! — the diggers! — the murderers! He is dead!"

"God forbid!" faltered Staines; but his own blood began to run cold.

"He is dead. He has died between this and the dreadful diamonds. I shall never see my darling again: he is dead. He is dead."

She rushed out of the room, and out of the house, throwing her arms above her head in despair, and uttering those words of agony again and again in every variety of anguish.

At such horrible moments women always swoon — if we are to believe the dramatists. I doubt if there is one grain of truth in this. Women seldom swoon at all, unless their bodies are unhealthy, or weakened by the reaction that follows so terrible a shock as this. At all events, Phœbe, at first, was strong and wild as a lion, and went to and fro outside the house, unconscious of her body's motion, frenzied with agony, and but one word on her lips, "He is dead! — he is dead!"

Dick followed her, crying like a child, but master of himself; he got his people about her, and half carried her in again; then shut the door in all their faces.

He got the poor creature to sit down, and she began to rock and moan, with her apron over her head, and her brown hair loose about her.

"Why should he be dead?" said Dick. "Don't give a man up like that, Phœbe. Doctor, tell us more about it. Oh, man, how could you let him out of your sight? You knew how fond the poor creature was of him."

"But that was it, Mr. Dale," said Staines. "I knew his wife must pine for him; and we had found six large diamonds, and a handful of small ones; but the market was glutted; and to get a better price, he wanted to go straight to Cape Town. But I said, 'No; go and show them to your wife, and see whether she will go to Cape Town.'"

Phœbe began to listen, as was evident by her moaning more softly.

"Might he not have gone straight to Cape Town?" Staines hazarded this timidly.

"Why should he do that, sir? Dale's Kloof is on the road."

"Only on one road. Mr. Dale, he was well armed, with rifle and revolver; and I cautioned him not to show a diamond on the road. Who would molest him? Diamonds don't show, like gold. Who was to know he had three thousand pounds hidden under his armpits, and in two barrels of his revolver?"

"Three thousand pounds!" cried Dale. "You trusted *him* with three thousand pounds?"

"Certainly. They were worth about three thousand pounds in Cape Town, and half as much again in"—

Phœbe started up in a moment. "Thank God!" she cried. "There's hope for me. Oh, Dick, he is not dead: HE HAS ONLY DESERTED ME."

And with these strange and pitiable words, she fell to sobbing as if her great heart would burst at last.

CHAPTER XXIV.

There came a reaction, and Phœbe was prostrated with grief and alarm. Her brother never doubted now that Reginald had run to Cape Town for a lark. But Phœbe, though she thought so too, could not be sure; and so the double agony of bereavement and desertion tortured her by turns, and almost together. For the first time these many years, she was so crushed she could not go about her business, but lay on a little sofa in her own room, and had the blinds down, for her head ached so she could not bear the light.

She conceived a bitter resentment against Staines; and told Dick never to let him into her sight, if he did not want to be her death.

In vain Dick made excuses for him: she would hear none. For once she was as unreasonable as any other living woman: she could see nothing but that she had been happy, after years of misery, and should be happy now if this man had never entered her house. "Ah, Collie!" she cried, "you were wiser than I was. You as good as told me he would make me smart for lodging and curing him. And I was *so* happy!"

Dale communicated this as delicately as he could to Staines. Christopher was deeply grieved and wounded. He thought it unjust, but he knew it was natural: he said, humbly, "I feel guilty myself, Mr. Dale; and yet, unless I had possessed omniscience, what could I do? I thought of her in all — poor thing! poor thing!"

The tears were in his eyes, and Dick Dale went away scratching his head and thinking it over. The

more he thought, the less he was inclined to condemn him.

Staines himself was much troubled in mind, and lived on thorns. He wanted to be off to England; grudged every day, every hour, he spent in Africa. But Mrs. Falcon was his benefactress; he had been, for months and months, garnering up a heap of gratitude towards her. He had not the heart to leave her bad friends, and in misery. He kept hoping Falcon would return, or write.

Two days after his return, he was seated, disconsolate, gluing garnets and carbuncles on to a broad tapering bit of lambskin, when Ucatella came to him and said, "My doctor child sick?"

"No, not sick: but miserable." And he explained to her, as well as he could, what had passed. "But," said he, "I would not mind the loss of the diamonds now, if I was only sure he was alive. I think most of poor, poor Mrs. Falcon."

While Ucatella pondered this, but with one eye of demure curiosity on the coronet he was making, he told her it was for her — he had not forgot her at the mines.

"These stones," said he, "are not valued there; but see how glorious they are!"

In a few minutes he had finished the coronet, and gave it her. She uttered a chuckle of delight, and with instinctive art, bound it, in a turn of her hand, about her brow; and then Staines himself was struck dumb with amazement. The carbuncles gathered from those mines look like rubies, so full of fire are they, and of enormous size. The chaplet had twelve great carbuncles in the centre, and went off by gradations into smaller garnets by the thousand. They flashed their blood-red flames in the African sun, and the head of Ucatella, grand before, became the head of the Sphinx, encircled

with a coronet of fire. She bestowed a look of rapturous gratitude on Staines, and then glided away, like the stately Juno, to admire herself in the nearest glass like any other coquette, black, brown, yellow, copper, or white.

That very day, towards sunset, she burst upon Staines quite suddenly, with her coronet gleaming on her magnificent head, and her eyes like coals of fire, and under her magnificent arm, hard as a rock, a boy kicking and struggling in vain. She was furiously excited, and, for the first time, showed signs of the savage in the whites of her eyes, which seemed to turn the glorious pupils into semicircles. She clutched Staines by the shoulder with her left hand, and swept along with the pair, like dark Fate, or as potent justice sweeps away a pair of culprits, and carried them to the little window, and cried "Open — open!"

Dick Dale was at dinner; Phœbe lying down. Dick got up, rather crossly, and threw open the window. "What is up now?" said he crossly: he was like two or three more Englishmen — hated to be bothered at dinner-time.

"Dar," screamed Ucatella, setting down Tim, but holding him tight by the shoulder; "now you tell what you see that night, you lilly Kafir trash; if you not tell, I kill you DEAD;" and she showed the whites of her eyes, like a wild beast.

Tim, thoroughly alarmed, quivered out that he had seen lilly master ride up to the gate one bright night, and look in, and Tim thought he was going in: but he changed his mind, and galloped away that way; and the monkey pointed south.

"And why couldn't you tell us this before?" questioned Dick.

"Me mind de sheep," said Tim apologetically. "Me not mind de lilly master: jackals not eat him."

"You no more sense dan a sheep yourself," said Ucatella loftily.

"No, no: God bless you both," cried poor Phœbe: "now I know the worst:" and a great burst of tears relieved her suffering heart.

Dick went out softly. When he got outside the door, he drew them all apart, and said, "Yuke, you *are* a good-hearted girl. I'll never forget this while I live; and, Tim, there's a shilling for thee; but don't you go and spend it in Cape smoke; that is poison to whites, and destruction to blacks."

"No, master," said Tim. "I shall buy much bread, and make my tomach tiff;" then, with a glance of reproach at the domestic caterer, Ucatella, "I almost never have my tomach tiff."

Dick left his sister alone an hour or two, to have her cry out.

When he went back to her there was a change: the brave woman no longer lay prostrate. She went about her business; only she was always either crying or drowning her tears.

He brought Dr. Staines in. Phœbe instantly turned her back on him with a shudder there was no mistaking.

"I had better go," said Staines. "Mrs. Falcon will never forgive me."

"She will have to quarrel with me else," said Dick steadily. "Sit you down, doctor. Honest folk like you and me and Phœbe wasn't made to quarrel for want of looking a thing all round. My sister she hasn't looked it all round, and I have. Come, Pheeb, 'tis no use your blinding yourself. How was the poor doctor to know your husband is a blackguard?"

"He is not a blackguard. How dare you say that to my face?"

"He is a blackguard, and always was. And now he

is a thief to boot. He has stolen those diamonds; you know that very well."

"Gently, Mr. Dale; you forget: they are as much his as mine."

"Well, and if half a sheep is mine, and I take the whole and sell him, and keep the money, what is that but stealing? Why, I wonder at you, Pheeb. You was always honest yourself, and yet you see the doctor robbed by your man, and that does not trouble you. What has he done to deserve it? He has been a good friend to us. He has put us on the road. We did little more than keep the pot boiling before he came — well, yes, we stored grain; but whose advice has turned that grain to gold, I might say? Well, what's his offence? He trusted the diamonds to your man, and sent him to you. Is he the first honest man that has trusted a rogue? How was he to know? Likely he judged the husband by the wife. Answer me one thing, Pheeb. If he makes away with fifteen hundred pounds that is his, or partly yours — for he has eaten your bread ever since I knew him — and fifteen hundred more that is the doctor's, where shall we find fifteen hundred pounds, all in a moment, to pay the doctor back his own?"

"My honest friend," said Staines, "you are tormenting yourself with shadows. I don't believe Mr. Falcon will wrong me of a shilling; and, if he does, I shall quietly repay myself out of the big diamond. Yes, my dear friends, I did not throw away your horse, nor your rifle, nor your money: I gave them all, and the lion's skin — I gave them all — for this."

And he laid the big diamond on the table.

It was as big as a walnut, and of the purest water.

Dick Dale glanced at it stupidly. Phœbe turned her back on it, with a cry of horror, and then came slowly round by degrees; and her eyes were fascinated by the royal gem.

"Yes," said Staines sadly, "I had to strip myself of all to buy it, and, when I had got it, how proud I was, and how happy I thought we should all be over it, for it is half yours, half mine. Yes, Mr. Dale, there lies six thousand pounds that belong to Mrs. Falcon."

"Six thousand pounds!" cried Dick.

"I'm sure of it. And so, if your suspicions are correct, and poor Falcon should yield to a sudden temptation, and spend all that money, I shall just coolly deduct it from your share of this wonderful stone: so make your mind easy. But no; if Falcon is really so wicked as to desert his happy home, and so mad as to spend thousands in a month or two, let us go and save him."

"That is my business," said Phœbe. "I am going in the mail-cart to-morrow."

"Well, you won't go alone," said Dick.

"Mrs. Falcon," said Staines imploringly, "let me go with you."

"Thank you, sir. My brother can take care of me."

"Me! You had better not take me. If I catch hold of him, by —— I'll break his neck, or his back, or his leg, or something; he'll never run away from you again, if I lay hands on him," replied Dick.

"I'll go alone. You are both against me."

"No, Mrs. Falcon; I am not," said Staines. "My heart bleeds for you."

"Don't you demean yourself, praying her," said Dick. "It's a public conveyance: you have no need to ask *her* leave."

"That is true: I can't hinder folk from going to Cape Town the same day," said Phœbe sullenly.

"If I might presume to advise, I would take little Tommy."

"What! all that road? Do you want me to lose my child, as well as my man?"

"O Mrs. Falcon!"

"Don't speak to her, doctor, to get your nose snapped off. Give her time. She'll come to her senses before she dies."

Next day Mrs. Falcon and Staines started for Cape Town. Staines paid her every attention, when opportunity offered. But she was sullen and gloomy, and held no converse with him.

He landed her at an inn, and then told her he would go at once to the jeweller's. He asked her piteously would she lend him a pound or two to prosecute his researches. She took out her purse, without a word, and lent him two pounds.

He began to scour the town: the jewellers he visited could tell him nothing. At last he came to a shop, and there he found Mrs. Falcon making her inquiries independently. She said coldly, "You had better come with me, and get your money and things."

She took him to the bank — it happened to be the one she did business with — and said, "This is Dr. Christie, come for his money and jewels."

There was some demur at this; but the cashier recognized him, and Phœbe making herself responsible, the money and jewels were handed over.

Staines whispered Phœbe, "Are you sure the jewels are mine?"

"They were found on you, sir."

Staines took them, looking confused. He did not know what to think. When they got into the street again, he told her it was very kind of her to think of his interest at all.

No answer: she was not going to make friends with him over such a trifle as that.

By degrees, however, Christopher's zeal on her behalf broke the ice; and besides, as the search proved unavail-

ing, she needed sympathy; and he gave it her, and did not abuse her husband as Dick Dale did.

One day, in the street, after a long thought, she said to him, "Didn't you say, sir, you gave him a letter for me?"

"I gave him two letters; one of them was to you."

"Could you remember what you said in it?"

"Perfectly. I begged you, if you should go to England, to break the truth to my wife. She is very excitable; and sudden joy has killed ere now. I gave you particular instructions."

"And you were very wise. But whatever could make you think I would go to England?"

"He told me you only wanted an excuse."

"Oh!!"

"When he told me that, I caught at it, of course. It was all the world to me to get my Rosa told by such a kind, good, sensible friend as you; and, Mrs. Falcon, I had no scruple about troubling you, because I knew the stones would sell for at least a thousand pounds more in England than here, and that would pay your expenses."

"I see, sir; I see. 'Twas very natural: you love your wife."

"Better than my life."

"And he told you I only wanted an excuse to go to England?"

"He did, indeed. It was not true?"

"It was anything but true. I had suffered so in England; I had been so happy here: too happy to last. Ah! well, it is all over. Let us think of the matter in hand. Sure that was not the only letter you gave my husband? Didn't you write to *her?*"

"Of course I did; but that was enclosed to you, and not to be given to her until you had broken the joyful news to her. Yes, Mrs. Falcon, I wrote and told her

everything: my loss at sea; how I was saved, after, by your kindness. Our journeys, from Cape Town, and then to the diggings; my sudden good fortune, my hopes, my joy — O my poor Rosa! and now I suppose she will never get it. It is too cruel of him. I shall go home by the next steamer. I *can't* stay here any longer, for you or anybody. Oh, and I enclosed my ruby ring that she gave me, for I thought she might not believe you without that."

"Let me think," said Phœbe, turning ashy pale. "For mercy's sake, let me think!

"He has read both those letters, sir.

"She will never see hers: any more than I shall see mine."

She paused again, thinking harder and harder.

"We must take two places in the next mail steamer. I must look after my husband, AND YOU AFTER YOUR WIFE."

CHAPTER XXV.

Mrs. Falcon's bitter feeling against Dr. Staines did not subside; it merely went out of sight a little. They were thrown together by potent circumstances, and in a manner connected by mutual obligations; so an open rupture seemed too unnatural. Still Phœbe was a woman, and, blinded by her love for her husband, could not forgive the innocent cause of their present unhappy separation; though the fault lay entirely with Falcon.

Staines took her on board the steamer, and paid her every attention. She was also civil to him; but it was a cold and constrained civility.

About a hundred miles from land the steamer stopped, and the passengers soon learned there was something wrong with her machinery. In fact, after due consultation, the captain decided to put back.

This irritated and distressed Mrs. Falcon so that the captain, desirous to oblige her, hailed a fast schooner, that tacked across her bows, and gave Mrs. Falcon the option of going back with him, or going on in the schooner, with whose skipper he was acquainted.

Staines advised her on no account to trust to sails, when she could have steam with only a delay of four or five days; but she said, "Anything sooner than go back. I can't, I can't on such an errand."

Accordingly she was put on board the schooner, and Staines, after some hesitation, felt bound to accompany her.

It proved a sad error. Contrary winds assailed them

the very next day, and with such severity that they had repeatedly to lie to.

On one of these occasions, with a ship reeling under them like a restive horse, and the waves running mountains high, poor Phœbe's terrors overmastered both her hostility and her reserve. "Doctor," said she, "I believe 'tis God's will we shall never see England. I must try and die more like a Christian than I have lived, forgiving all who have wronged me, and you, that have been my good friend and my worst enemy, but you did not mean it. Sir, what has turned me against you so — your wife was my husband's sweetheart before he married me."

"My wife your husband's — you are dreaming."

"Nay, sir, once she came to my shop, and I saw directly I was nothing to him, and he owned it all to me; he had courted her, and she jilted him; so he said. Why should he tell me a lie about that? I'd lay my life 'tis true. And now you have sent him to her your own self; and, at sight of her, I shall be nothing again. Well, when this ship goes down, they can marry, and I hope he will be happy, happier than I can make him, that tried my best, God knows."

This conversation surprised Staines not a little. However, he said, with great warmth, it was false. His wife had danced and flirted with some young gentleman at one time, when there was a brief misunderstanding between him and her, but sweetheart she had never had, except him. He courted her fresh from school. "Now, my good soul," said he, "make your mind easy; the ship is a good one, and well handled, and in no danger whatever, and my wife is in no danger from your husband. Since you and your brother tell me that he is a villain, I am bound to believe you. But my wife is an angel. In our miserable hour of parting, she vowed not to marry again, should I be taken from her.

Marry again! what am I talking of? Why, if he visits her at all, it will be to let her know I am alive, and give her my letter. Do you mean to tell me she will listen to vows of love from him, when her whole heart is in rapture for me? Such nonsense!"

This burst of his did not affront her, and did not comfort her.

At last the wind abated; and after a wearisome calm, a light breeze came, and the schooner crept homeward.

Phœbe restrained herself for several days; but at last she came back to the subject; this time it was in an apologetic tone at starting. "I know you think me a foolish woman," she said; "but my poor Reginald could never resist a pretty face; and she is so lovely; and you should have seen how he turned when she came in to my place. Oh, sir, there has been more between them than you know of; and when I think that he will have been in England so many months before we get there, oh, doctor, sometimes I feel as I should go mad; my head it is like a furnace, and see, my brow is all wrinkled again."

Then Staines tried to comfort her; assured her she was tormenting herself idly; her husband would perhaps have spent some of the diamond money on his amusement; but what if he had? he should deduct it out of the big diamond, which was also their joint property, and the loss would hardly be felt. "As to my wife, madam, I have but one anxiety; lest he should go blurting it out that I am alive, and almost kill her with joy."

"He will not do that, sir. He is no fool."

"I am glad of it; for there is nothing else to fear."

"Man, I tell you there is everything to fear. You don't know him as I do; nor his power over women."

"Mrs. Falcon, are you bent on affronting me?"

"No, sir; Heaven forbid!"

"Then please to close this subject forever. In three weeks we shall be in England."

"Ay; but he has been there six months."

He bowed stiffly to her, went to his cabin, and avoided the poor foolish woman as much as he could without seeming too unkind.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mrs. Staines made one or two movements — to stop Lord Tadcaster — with her hand, that expressive feature with which, at such times, a sensitive woman can do all but speak.

When at last he paused for her reply, she said, "Me marry again! Oh! for shame!"

"Mrs. Staines — Rosa — you will marry again, some day."

"Never. Me take another husband, after such a man as I have lost! I should be a monster. Oh, Lord Tadcaster, you have been so kind to me; so sympathizing. You made me believe you loved my Christopher, too; and now you have spoiled all. It is too cruel."

"Oh! Mrs. Staines, do you think me capable of feigning — don't you see my love for you has taken you by surprise? But how could I visit you — look on you — hear you — mingle my regrets with yours; yours were the deepest, of course; but mine were honest."

"I believe it." And she gave him her hand. He held it, and kissed it, and cried over it, as the young will, and implored her, on his knees, not to condemn herself to life-long widowhood, and him to despair.

Then she cried, too; but she was firm; and by degrees she made him see that her heart was inaccessible.

Then at last he submitted with tearful eyes, but a valiant heart.

She offered friendship timidly.

But he was too much of a man to fall into that trap.

"No," he said: "I could not, I could not. Love or nothing."

"You are right," said she, pityingly. "Forgive me. In my selfishness and my usual folly, I did not see this coming on, or I would have spared you this mortification."

"Never mind that," gulped the little earl. "I shall always be proud I knew you, and proud I loved you, and offered you my hand."

Then the magnanimous little fellow blessed her, and left her, and discontinued his visits.

Mr. Lusignan found her crying, and got the truth out of her. He was in despair. He remonstrated kindly, but firmly. Truth compels me to say that she politely ignored him. He observed that phenomenon, and said, "Very well then, I shall telegraph for Uncle Philip."

"Do," said the rebel. "He is always welcome."

Philip, telegraphed, came down that evening; likewise his little black bag. He found them in the drawing-room: papa with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Rosa seated, sewing, at a lamp. She made little Christie's clothes herself, — fancy that!

Having ascertained that the little boy was well, Philip, adroitly hiding that he had come down torn with anxiety on that head, inquired with a show of contemptuous indifference, whose cat was dead.

"Nobody's," said Lusignan crossly. Then he turned and pointed the *Gazette* at his offspring. "Do you see that young lady stitching there so demurely?"

Philip carefully wiped and then put on his spectacles.

"I see her," said he. "She does look a little too innocent. None of them are really so innocent as all that. Has she been swearing at the nurse, and boxing her ears?"

"Worse than that. She has been and refused the Earl of Tadcaster."

"Refused him — what! has that little monkey had the audacity?"

"The condescension, you mean. Yes."

"And she has refused him?"

"And twenty thousand a year."

"What immorality!"

"Worse. What absurdity!"

"How is it to be accounted for? Is it the old story? 'I could never love him.' No; that's inadequate; for they all love a title and twenty thousand a year."

Rosa sewed on all this time in demure and absolute silence.

"She ignores us," said Philip. "It is intolerable. She does not appreciate our politeness in talking *at* her. Let us arraign her before our sacred tribunal, and have her into court. Now, mistress, the Senate of Venice is assembled, and you must be pleased to tell us why you refused a title and twenty thousand a year, with a small but symmetrical earl tacked on."

Rosa laid down her work, and said quietly, "Uncle, almost the last words that passed between me and my Christopher, we promised each other solemnly never to marry again till death should us part. You know how deep my sorrow has been that I can find so few wishes of my lost Christopher to obey. Well, to-day I have had an opportunity at last. I have obeyed my own lost one; it has cost me a tear or two; but, for all that, it has given me one little gleam of happiness. Ah, foolish woman, that obeys too late!"

And with this the tears began to run.

All this seemed a little too high-flown to Mr. Lusignan. "There," said he, "see on what a straw her mind turns. So, but for that, you would have done the right thing, and married the earl?"

"I dare say I should — at the time — to stop his crying."

And with this listless remark she quietly took up her sewing again.

The sagacious Philip looked at her gravely. He thought to himself how piteous it was to see so young and lovely a creature, that had given up all hope of happiness for herself. These being his real thoughts, he expressed himself as follows: "We had better drop this subject, sir. This young lady will take us potent, grave, and reverend seignors out of our depth, if we don't mind."

But the moment he got her alone he kissed her paternally, and said, "Rosa, it is not lost on me, your fidelity to the dead. As years roll on, and your deep wound first closes, then skins, then heals —"

"Ah, let me die first —"

"Time and nature will absolve you from that vow; but bless you for thinking this can never be. Rosa, your folly of this day has made you my heir; so never let money tempt you, for you have enough, and will have more than enough when I go."

He was as good as his word; altered his will next day, and made Rosa his residuary legatee. When he had done this, foreseeing no fresh occasion for his services, he prepared for a long visit to Italy. He was packing up his things to go there, when he received a line from Lady Cicely Treherne, asking him to call on her professionally. As the lady's servant brought it, he sent back a line to say he no longer practised medicine, but would call on her as a friend in an hour's time.

He found her reclining, the picture of lassitude. "How good of you to come," she drawled.

"What's the matter?" said he brusquely.

"I wish to cawnsult you about myself. I think if anybody can brighten me up, it is you. I feel such a languaw — such a want of spirit; and I get palaa, and that is not desiwable."

He examined her tongue and the white of her eye, and told her, in his blunt way, she ate and drank too much.

"Excuse me, sir," said she stiffly.

"I mean too often. Now, let's see. Cup of tea in bed, of a morning?"

"Yaas."

"Dinner at two?"

"We call it luncheon."

"Are you a ventriloquist?"

"No."

"Then it is only your lips call it luncheon. Your poor stomach, could it speak, would call it dinner. Afternoon tea?"

"Yaas."

"At seven-thirty another dinner. Tea after that. Yonr afflicted stomach gets no rest. You eat pastry?"

"I confess it."

"And sugar in a dozen forms?"

She nodded.

"Well, sugar is poison to your temperament. Now I'll set you up, if you can obey. Give up your morning dram."

"What dwam?"

"Tea in bed, before eating. Can't you see that is a dram? Animal food twice a day. No wine but a little claret and water; no pastry, no sweets, and play battledore with one of your male subjects."

"Battledaw! won't a lady do for that?"

"No: you would get talking, and not play *ad sudorem.*"

"Ad sudawem! what is that?"

"In earnest."

"And will sudawem and the west put me in better spiwits, and give me a tinge?"

"It will incarnadine the lily, and make you the happiest young lady in England, as you are the best."

"I should like to be much happier than I am good, if we could manage it among us."

"We will manage it *among* us; for if the diet allowed should not make you boisterously gay, I have a remedy behind, suited to your temperament. I am old-fashioned, and believe in the temperaments."

"And what is that wemedy?"

"Try diet, and hard exercise, first."

"Oh, yes; but let me know that wemedy."

"I warn you it is what we call in medicine an heroic one."

"Never mind. I am despewate."

"Well, then, the heroic remedy — to be used only as a desperate resort, mind — you must marry an Irishman."

This took the lady's breath away.

"Mawwy a nice man?"

"A nice man; no. That means a fool. Marry scientifically — a precaution eternally neglected. Marry a Hibernian gentleman, a being as mercurial as you are lymphatic."

"Mercurial! — lymphatic!" —

"Oh, hard words break no bones, ma'am."

"No, sir. And it is very curious. No, I won't tell you. Yes, I will. Hem! — I think I have noticed one."

"One what?"

"One Iwishman — dangling after me."

"Then your ladyship has only to tighten the cord — and *he's* done for."

Having administered this prescription, our laughing philosopher went off to Italy, and there fell in with some countrymen to his mind, so he accompanied them to Egypt and Palestine.

His absence, and Lord Tadcaster's, made Rosa Staines's life extremely monotonous. Day followed day, and week

followed week, each so unvarying, that, on a retrospect, three months seemed like one day.

And I think at last youth and nature began to rebel, and secretly to crave some little change or incident to ruffle the stagnant pool. Yet she would not go into society, and would only receive two or three dull people at the villa; so she made the very monotony which was beginning to tire her, and nursed a sacred grief she had no need to nurse, it was so truly genuine.

She was in this forlorn condition, when, one morning, a carriage drove to the door, and a card was brought up to her — "Mr. Reginald Falcon."

Falcon's history, between this and our last advices, is soon disposed of.

When, after a little struggle with his better angel, he rode past his wife's gate, he intended, at first, only to go to Cape Town, sell the diamonds, have a lark, and bring home the balance: but, as he rode south, his views expanded. He could have ten times the fun in London, and cheaper; since he could sell the diamonds for more money, and also conceal the true price. This was the Bohemian's whole mind in the business. He had no designs whatever on Mrs. Staines, nor did he intend to steal the diamonds, but to embezzle a portion of the purchase-money, and enjoy the pleasures and vices of the capital for a few months; then back to his milch cow, Phœbe, and lead a quiet life till the next uncontrollable fit should come upon him along with the means of satisfying it.

On the way, he read Staines's letter to Mrs. Falcon, very carefully. He never broke the seal of the letter to Mrs. Staines. That was to be given her when he had broken the good news to her; and this he determined to do with such skill, as should make Dr. Staines very unwilling to look suspiciously or ill-naturedly into money accounts.

He reached London; and being a thorough egotist, attended first to his own interests; he never went near Mrs. Staines until he had visited every diamond merchant and dealer in the metropolis; he showed the small stones to them all; but he showed no more than one large stone to each.

At last he got an offer of twelve hundred pounds for the small stones, and the same for the large yellow stone, and nine hundred pounds for the second largest stone. He took this nine hundred pounds, and instantly wrote to Phœbe, telling her he had a sudden inspiration to bring the diamonds to England, which he could not regret, since he had never done a wiser thing. He had sold a single stone for eight hundred pounds, and had sent the doctor's four hundred pounds to her account in Cape Town; and as each sale was effected, the half would be so remitted. She would see by that, he was wiser than in former days. He should only stay so long as might be necessary to sell them all equally well. His own share he would apply to paying off mortgages on the family estate, of which he hoped some day to see her the mistress, or he would send it direct to her, whichever she might prefer.

Now the main object of this artful letter was to keep Phœbe quiet, and not have her coming after him, of which he felt she was very capable.

The money got safe to Cape Town, but the letter to Phœbe miscarried. How this happened was never positively known; but the servant of the lodging-house was afterwards detected cutting stamps off a letter; so perhaps she had played that game on this occasion.

By this means, matters took a curious turn. Falcon, intending to lull his wife into a false security, lulled himself into that state instead.

When he had taken care of himself, and got five hun-

dred pounds to play the fool with, then he condescended to remember his errand of mercy; and he came down to Gravesend, to see Mrs. Staines.

On the road, he gave his mind seriously to the delicate and dangerous task. It did not, however, disquiet him as it would you, sir, or you, madam. He had a great advantage over you. He was a liar — a smooth, ready, accomplished liar — and he knew it.

This was the outline he had traced in his mind: he should appear very subdued and sad; should wear an air of condolence. But, after a while, should say, "And yet men have been lost like that, and escaped. A man was picked up on a raft in those very latitudes, and brought into Cape Town. A friend of mine saw him, months after, at the hospital. His memory was shaken — could not tell his name; but in other respects he was all right again."

If Mrs. Staines took fire at this, he would say his friend knew all the particulars, and he would ask him, and so leave that to rankle till next visit. And having planted his germ of hope, he would grow it, and water it, by visits and correspondence, till he could throw off the mask, and say he was convinced Staines was alive: and from that, by other degrees, till he could say, on his wife's authority, that the man picked up at sea, and cured at her house, was the very physician who had saved her brother's life: and so on to the overwhelming proof he carried in the ruby ring and the letter.

I am afraid the cunning and dexterity, the subtlety and tact required, interested him more in the commission than did the benevolence. He called, sent up his card, and composed his countenance for his part, like an actor at the Wing.

"Not at home."

He stared with amazement.

The history of a "Not at home" is not, in general, worth recording: but this is an exception.

On receiving Falcon's card, Mrs. Staines gave a little start, and colored faintly. She instantly resolved not to see him. What! the man she had flirted with, almost jilted, and refused to marry — he dared to be alive when her Christopher was dead, and had come there to show her *he* was alive!

She said "Not at home" with a tone of unusual sharpness and decision, which left the servant in no doubt he must be equally decided at the hall door.

Falcon received the sudden freezer with amazement. "Nonsense," said he. "Not at home at this time of the morning — to an old friend!"

"Not at home," said the man doggedly.

"Oh, very well," said Falcon with a bitter sneer, and returned to London.

He felt sure she was at home; and being a tremendous egotist, he said, "Oh! all right. If she would rather not know her husband is alive, it is all one to me;" and he actually took no more notice of her for a full week, and never thought of her, except to chuckle over the penalty she was paying for daring to affront his vanity.

However, Sunday came; he saw a dull day before him, and so he relented, and thought he would give her another trial.

He went down to Gravesend by boat, and strolled towards the villa.

When he was about a hundred yards from the villa, a lady, all in black, came out with a nurse and child.

Falcon knew her figure all that way off, and it gave him a curious thrill that surprised him. He followed her, and was not very far behind her when she reached the church. She turned at the porch, kissed the child

earnestly, and gave the nurse some directions; then entered the church.

"Come," said Falcon, "I'll have a look at her, any way."

He went into the church, and walked up a side aisle to a pillar, from which he thought he might be able to see the whole congregation; and, sure enough, there she sat, a few yards from him. She was lovelier than ever. Mind had grown on her face with trouble. An angelic expression illuminated her beauty; he gazed on her, fascinated. He drank and drank her beauty two mortal hours, and when the church broke up, and she went home, he was half afraid to follow her, for he felt how hard it would be to say anything to her but that the old love had returned on him with double force.

However, having watched her home, he walked slowly to and fro composing himself for the interview.

He now determined to make the process of informing her a very long one: he would spin it out, and so secure many a sweet interview with her: and, who knows? he might fascinate her as she had him, and ripen gratitude into love, as he understood that word.

He called, he sent in his card. The man went in, and came back with a sonorous "Not at home."

"Not at home? nonsense. Why, she is just come in from church."

"Not at home," said the man, evidently strong in his instructions.

Falcon turned white with rage at this second affront. "All the worse for her," said he, and turned on his heel.

He went home, raging with disappointment and wounded vanity, and — since such love as his is seldom very far from hate — he swore she should never know from him that her husband was alive. He even moral-

ized. "This comes of being so unselfish," said he. "I'll give that game up forever."

By and by, a mere negative revenge was not enough for him, and he set his wits to work to make her smart.

He wrote to her from his lodgings: —

DEAR MADAM, — What a pity you are never at home to me. I had something to say about your husband, that I thought might interest you

Yours truly,

R. FALCON.

Imagine the effect of this abominable note. It was like a rock flung into a placid pool. It set Rosa trembling all over. What could he mean?

She ran with it to her father, and asked him what Mr. Falcon could mean.

"I have no idea," said he. "You had better ask him, not me."

"I am afraid it is only to get to see me. You know he admired me once. Ah, how suspicious I am getting."

Rosa wrote to Falcon: —

DEAR SIR, — Since my bereavement I see scarcely anybody. My servant did not know you; so I hope you will excuse me. If it is too much trouble to call again, would you kindly explain your note to me?

Yours respectfully,

ROSA STAINES.

Falcon chuckled bitterly over this. "No, my lady," said he. "I'll serve you out. You shall run after me like a little dog. I have got the bone that will draw you."

He wrote back coldly to say that the matter he had wished to communicate was too delicate and important to put on paper; that he would try and get down to Gravesend again some day or other, but was much occu-

pied, and had already put himself to inconvenience. He added, in a postscript, that he was always at home from four to five.

Next day he got hold of the servant, and gave her minute instructions, and a guinea.

Then the wretch got some tools and bored a hole in the partition wall of his sitting-room. The paper had large flowers. He was artist enough to conceal the trick with water-colors. In his bed-room the hole came behind the curtains.

That very afternoon, as he had foreseen, Mrs. Staines called on him. The maid, duly instructed, said Mr. Falcon was out, but would soon return, and could she wait his return? The maid being so very civil, Mrs. Staines said she would wait a little while, and was immediately ushered into Falcon's sitting-room. There she sat down; but was evidently ill at ease, restless, flushed. She could not sit quiet, and at last began to walk up and down the room, almost wildly. Her beautiful eyes glittered, and the whole woman seemed on fire. The caitiff, who was watching her, saw and gloated on all this, and enjoyed to the full her beauty and agitation, and his revenge for her "Not at homes."

But after a long time, there was a reaction: she sat down and uttered some plaintive sounds inarticulate, or nearly; and at last she began to cry.

Then it cost Falcon an effort not to come in and comfort her; but he controlled himself and kept quiet.

She rang the bell. She asked for writing paper, and she wrote her unseen tormentor a humble note, begging him, for old acquaintance, to call on her, and tell her what his mysterious words meant that had filled her with agitation.

This done, she went away, with a deep sigh, and Falcon emerged, and pounced upon her letter.

He kissed it; he read it a dozen times: he sat down where she had sat, and his base passion overpowered him. Her beauty, her agitation, her fear, her tears, all combined to madden him, and do the devil's work in his false, selfish heart, so open to violent passions, so dead to conscience.

For once in his life he was violently agitated, and torn by conflicting feelings: he walked about the room more wildly than his victim had; and if it be true that, in certain great temptations, good and bad angels fight for a man, here you might have seen as fierce a battle of that kind as ever was.

At last he rushed out into the air, and did not return till ten o'clock at night. He came back pale and haggard, and with a look of crime upon his face.

True Bohemian as he was, he sent for a pint of brandy.

So then the die was cast, and something was to be done that called for brandy.

He bolted himself in, and drank a wine-glass of it neat; then another; then another.

Now his pale cheek is flushed, and his eye glitters. Drink forever! great ruin of English souls as well as bodies.

He put the poker in the fire, and heated it red hot.

He brought Staines's letter, and softened the sealing-wax with the hot poker; then with his pen-knife made a neat incision in the wax, and opened the letter. He took out the ring, and put it carefully away. Then he lighted a cigar, and read the letter, and studied it. Many a man, capable of murder in heat of passion, could not have resisted the pathos of this letter. Many a Newgate thief, after reading it, would have felt such pity for the loving husband who had suffered to the verge of death, and then to the brink of madness, and for the poor bereaved wife, that he would have taken

the letter down to Gravesend that very night, though he picked two fresh pockets to defray the expenses of the road.

But this was an egotist. Good nature had curbed his egotism a little while; but now vanity and passion had swept away all unselfish feelings, and the pure egotist alone remained.

Now, the pure egotist has been defined as a man who will burn down his *neighbor's* house to cook *himself* an egg. Murder is but egotism carried out to its natural climax. What is murder to a pure egotist, especially a brandied one?

I knew an egotist who met a female acquaintance in Newhaven village. She had a one-pound note, and offered to treat him. She changed this note to treat him. Fish she gave him, and much whiskey. Cost her four shillings. He ate and drank with her, at her expense; and his aorta, or principal blood-vessel, being warmed with her whiskey, he murdered her for the change, the odd sixteen shillings.

I had the pleasure of seeing that egotist hung, with these eyes. It was a slice of luck that, I grieve to say, has not occurred again to me.

So much for a whiskied egotist.

His less truculent but equally remorseless brother in villany, the brandied egotist, Falcon, could read that poor husband's letter without blenching; the love and the anticipations of rapture, these made him writhe a little with jealousy, but they roused not a grain of pity. He was a true egotist, blind, remorseless.

In this, his true character, he studied the letter profoundly, and mastered all the facts, and digested them well.

All manner of diabolical artifices presented themselves to his brain, barren of true intellect, yet fertile in fraud;

in that, and all low cunning and subtlety, far more than a match for Solomon or Bacon.

His sinister studies were pursued far into the night. Then he went to bed, and his unbounded egotism gave him the sleep a grander criminal would have courted in vain on the verge of a monstrous and deliberate crime.

Next day he went to a fashionable tailor, and ordered a complete suit of black. This was made in forty-eight hours; the interval was spent mainly in concocting lies to be incorporated with the number of minute facts he had gained from Staines's letter, and in making close imitations of his handwriting.

Thus armed, and crammed with more lies than the "Menteur" of Corneille, but not such innocent ones, he went down to Gravesend, all in deep mourning, with crape round his hat.

He presented himself at the villa.

The servant was all obsequiousness. Yes, Mrs. Staines received few visitors; but she was at home to *him*. He even began to falter excuses. "Nonsense," said Falcon, and slipped a sovereign into his hand; "you are a good servant, and obey orders."

The servant's respect doubled, and he ushered the visitor into the drawing-room, as one whose name was a passport. "Mr. Reginald Falcon, madam."

Mrs. Staines was alone. She rose to meet him. Her color came and went, her full eye fell on him, and took in all at a glance — that he was all in black, and that he had a beard, and looked pale, and ill at ease.

Little dreaming that this was the anxiety of a felon about to take the actual plunge into a novel crime, she was rather prepossessed by it. The beard gave him dignity, and hid his mean, cruel mouth. His black suit seemed to say he, too, had lost some one dear to him; and that was a ground of sympathy.

She received him kindly, and thanked him for taking the trouble to come again. She begged him to be seated; and then, womanlike, she waited for him to explain.

But he was in no hurry, and waited for her. He knew she would speak if he was silent.

She could not keep him waiting long. "Mr. Falcon," said she, hesitating a little, "you have something to say to me about him I have lost."

"Yes," said he softly. "I have something I could say, and I think I ought to say it; but I am afraid: because I don't know what will be the result. I fear to make you more unhappy."

"Me! more unhappy? Me, whose dear husband lies at the bottom of the ocean. Other poor wounded creatures have the wretched comfort of knowing where he lies — of carrying flowers to his tomb. But I — oh, Mr. Falcon, I am bereaved of all: even his poor remains lost, — lost" — she could say no more.

Then that craven heart began to quake at what he was doing; quaked, yet persevered; but his own voice quivered, and his cheek grew ashy pale. No wonder. If ever God condescended to pour lightning on a skunk, surely now was the time.

Shaking and sweating with terror at his own act, he stammered out, "Would it be the least comfort to you to know that you are not denied that poor consolation? Suppose he died not so miserably as you think? Suppose he was picked up at sea, in a dying state?"

"Ah!"

"Suppose he lingered, nursed by kind and sympathizing hands, that almost saved him? Suppose he was laid in hallowed ground, and a great many tears shed over his grave?"

"Ah, that would indeed be a comfort. And it was to say this you came. I thank you. I bless you. But, my

good, kind friend, you are deceived. You don't know my husband. You never saw him. He perished at sea."

"Will it be kind or unkind, to tell you why I think he died as I tell you, and not at sea?"

"Kind, but impossible. You deceive yourself. Ah, I see. You found some poor sufferer, and were good to him; but it was not my poor Christie. Oh, if it were, I should worship you. But I thank you as it is. It was very kind to want to give me this little, little crumb of comfort; for I know I did not behave well to you, sir: but you are generous, and have forgiven a poor heart-broken creature, that never was very wise."

He gave her time to cry, and then said to her, "I only wanted to be sure it *would* be any comfort to you. Mrs. Staines, it is true I did not even know his name; nor yours. When I met, in this very room, the great disappointment that has saddened my own life, I left England directly. I collected funds, went to Natal, and turned land-owner and farmer. I have made a large fortune, but I need not tell you I am not happy. Well, I had a yacht, and sailing from Cape Town to Algoa Bay, I picked up a raft, with a dying man on it. He was perishing from exhaustion and exposure. I got a little brandy between his lips, and kept him alive. I landed with him at once: and we nursed him on shore. We had to be very cautious. He improved. We got him to take egg-flip. He smiled on us at first, and then he thanked us. I nursed him day and night for ten days. He got much stronger. He spoke to me, thanked him again and again, and told me his name was Christopher Staines. He told me that he should never get well. I implored him to have courage. He said he did not want for courage; but nature had been tried too hard. We got so fond of each other. Oh!" — and the caitiff pre-

tended to break down; and his feigned grief mingled with Rosa's despairing sobs.

He made an apparent effort, and said, "He spoke to me of his wife, his darling Rosa. The name made me start, but I could not know it was you. At last he was strong enough to write a few lines, and he made me promise to take them to his wife."

"Ah!" said Rosa. "Show them me."

"I will."

"This moment." And her hands began to work convulsively.

"I cannot," said Falcon. "I have not brought them with me."

Rosa cast a keen eye of suspicion and terror on him. His not bringing the letter seemed monstrous; and so indeed it was. The fact is, the letter was not written.

Falcon affected not to notice her keen look. He flowed on, "The address he put on that letter astonished me. 'Kent Villa.' Of course I knew Kent Villa: and he called you 'Rosa.'"

"How could you come to me without that letter?" cried Rosa, wringing her hands. "How am I to know? It is all so strange, so incredible."

"Don't you believe me?" said Falcon sadly. "Why should I deceive you? The first time I came down to tell you all this, I did not *know* who Mrs. Staines was. I suspected; but no more. The second time I saw you in the church, and then I knew; and followed you to try and tell you all this; and you were not at home to me."

"Forgive me," said Rosa carelessly: then earnestly, "The letter! when can I see it?"

"I will send, or bring it."

"Bring it! I am in agony till I see it. Oh, my darling! my darling! It can't be true. It was not my

Christie. He lies in the depths of the ocean. Lord Tadcaster was in the ship, and he says so; everybody says so."

"And I say he sleeps in hallowed ground, and these hands laid him there."

Rosa lifted her hands to heaven, and cried piteously, "I don't know what to think. You would not willingly deceive me. But how can this be? Oh, Uncle Philip, why are you away from me? Sir, you say he gave you a letter?"

"Yes."

"Oh, why, why did you not bring it?"

"Because he told me the contents; and I thought he prized my poor efforts too highly. It did not occur to me you would doubt my word."

"Oh, no: no more I do: but I fear it was not my Christie."

"I'll go for the letter at once, Mrs. Staines."

"Oh, thank you! Bless you! Yes, this minute!"

The artful rogue did not go; never intended.

He rose *to go;* but had a sudden inspiration; very sudden, of course. "Had he nothing about him you could recognize him by?"

"Yes, he had a ring I gave him."

Falcon took a black-edged envelope out of his pocket.

"A ruby ring," said she, beginning to tremble at his quiet action.

"Is that it?" and he handed her a ruby ring.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mrs. Staines uttered a sharp cry and seized the ring. Her eyes dilated over it, and she began to tremble in every limb; and at last she sank slowly back, and her head fell on one side like a broken lily. The sudden sight of the ring overpowered her almost to fainting.

Falcon rose to call for assistance; but she made him a feeble motion not to do so.

She got the better of her faintness, and then she fell to kissing the ring, in an agony of love, and wept over it, and still held it, and gazed at it through her blinding tears.

Falcon eyed her uneasily.

But he soon found he had nothing to fear. For a long time she seemed scarcely aware of his presence; and when she noticed him, it was to thank him, almost passionately.

"It was my Christie you were so good to: may Heaven bless you for it: and you will bring me his letter, will you not?"

"Of course I will."

"Oh, do not go yet. It is all so strange: so sad. I seem to have lost my poor Christie again, since he did not die at sea. But no, I am ungrateful to God, and ungrateful to the kind friend that nursed him to the last. Ah, I envy you that. Tell me all. Never mind my crying. I have seen the time I could not cry. It was worse then than now. I shall always cry when I speak of him, ay, to my dying day. Tell me, tell me all."

Her passion frightened the egotist, but did not turn

him. He had gone too far. He told her that, after raising all their hopes, Dr. Staines had suddenly changed for the worse, and sunk rapidly; that his last words had been about her, and he had said, "My poor Rosa, who will protect her?" That, to comfort him, he had said he would protect her. Then the dying man had managed to write a line or two, and to address it. Almost his last words had been, "Be a father to my child."

"That is strange."

"You have no child? Then it must have been you he meant. He spoke of you as a child more than once."

"Mr. Falcon, I have a child; but born since I lost my poor child's father."

"Then I think he knew it. They say that dying men can see all over the world: and I remember, when he said it, his eyes seemed fixed very strangely, as if on something distant. Oh, how wonderful all this is. May I see his child, to whom I promised" —

The artist in lies left his sentence half completed.

Rosa rang, and sent for her little boy.

Mr. Falcon admired his beauty, and said quietly, "I shall keep my vow."

He then left her, with a promise to come back early next morning with the letter.

She let him go only on those conditions.

As soon as her father came in, she ran to him with this strange story.

"I don't believe it," said he. "It is impossible."

She showed him the proof, the ruby ring.

Then he became very uneasy, and begged her not to tell a soul. He did not tell her the reason, but he feared the insurance office would hear of it, and require proofs of Christopher's decease, whereas they had accepted it without a murmur, on the evidence of Captain Hamilton and the Amphitrite's log-book.

As for Falcon, he went carefully through Staines's two letters, and wherever he found a word that suited his purpose, he traced it by the usual process, and so, in the course of a few hours, he concocted a short letter, all the words in which, except three, were facsimiles, only here and there a little shaky; the three odd words he had to imitate by observation of the letters. The signature he got to perfection by tracing.

He inserted this letter in the original envelope, and sealed it very carefully, so as to hide that the seal had been tampered with.

Thus armed, he went down to Gravesend. There he hired a horse and rode to Kent Villa.

Why he hired a horse, he knew how hard it is to forge handwriting, and he chose to have the means of escape at hand.

He came into the drawing-room, ghastly pale, and almost immediately gave her the letter; then turned his back, feigning delicacy. In reality he was quaking with fear lest she should suspect the handwriting. But the envelope was addressed by Staines, and paved the way for the letter; she was unsuspicious and good, and her heart cried out for her husband's last written words: at such a moment, what chance had judgment and suspicion in an innocent and loving soul?

Her eloquent sighs and sobs soon told the caitiff he had nothing to fear.

The letter ran thus: —

My own Rosa, — All that a brother could do for a beloved brother, Falcon has done. He nursed me night and day. But it is vain. I shall never see you again in this world. I send you a protector, and a father to your child. Value him. He has promised to be your stay on earth, and my spirit shall watch over you. — To my last breath, your loving husband,

Christopher Staines.

Falcon rose, and began to steal on tiptoe out of the room.

Rosa stopped him. "You need not go," said she. "You are our friend. By and by I hope I shall find words to thank you."

"Pray let me retire a moment," said the hypocrite. "A husband's last words: too sacred — a stranger:" and he went out into the garden. There he found the nursemaid Emily, and the little boy.

He stopped the child, and made love to the nursemaid; showed her his diamonds — he carried them all about him — told her he had thirty thousand acres in Cape Colony, and diamonds on them; and was going to buy thirty thousand more of the government. "Here, take one," said he. "Oh, you needn't be shy. They are common enough on my estates. I'll tell you what, though, you could not buy that for less than thirty pounds at any shop in London. Could she, my little duck? Never mind, it is no brighter than her eyes. Now do you know what she will do with that, Master Christie? She will give it to some duffer to put in a pin."

"She won't do nothing of the kind," said Emily, flushing all over. "She is not such a fool." She then volunteered to tell him she had no sweetheart, and did not trouble her head about young men at all. He interpreted this to mean she was looking out for one. So do I.

"No sweetheart!" said he; "and the prettiest girl I have seen since I landed: then I put in for the situation."

Here, seeing the footman coming, he bestowed a most paternal kiss on little Christie, and saying, "Not a word to John, or no more diamonds from me;" he moved carefully away, leaving the girl all in a flutter with extravagant hopes.

The next moment this wolf in the sheep-fold entered the drawing-room. Mrs. Staines was not there. He waited, and waited, and began to get rather uneasy, as men will who walk among pitfalls.

Presently the footman came to say that Mrs. Staines was with her father, in his study, but she would come to him in five minutes.

This increased his anxiety. What! She was taking advice of an older head. He began to be very seriously alarmed, and, indeed, had pretty well made up his mind to go down and gallop off, when the door opened, and Rosa came hastily in. Her eyes were very red with weeping. She came to him with both hands extended to him; he gave her his, timidly. She pressed them with such earnestness and power as he could not have suspected; and thanked him, and blessed him, with such a torrent of eloquence, that he hung his head with shame; and, being unable to face it out, villain as he was, yet still artful to the core, he pretended to burst out crying, and ran out of the room, and rode away.

He waited two days, and then called again. Rosa reproached him sweetly for going before she had half thanked him.

"All the better," said he. "I have been thanked a great deal too much already. Who would not do his best for a dying countryman, and fight night and day to save him for his wife and child at home? If I had succeeded, then I would be greedy of praise: but now it makes me blush; it makes me very sad."

"You did your best," said Rosa tearfully.

"Ah! that I did. Indeed, I was ill for weeks after, myself, through the strain upon my mind, and the disappointment, and going so many nights without sleep. But don't let us talk of that."

"Do you know what my darling says to me in my letter?"

"No."

"Would you like to see it?"

"Indeed I should; but I have no right."

"Every right. It is the only mark of esteem, worth anything, I can show you."

She handed him the letter, and buried her own face in her hands.

He read it, and acted the deepest emotion.

He handed it back, without a word.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From this time Falcon was always welcome at Kent Villa. He fascinated everybody in the house. He renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Lusignan, and got asked to stay a week in the house. He showed Rosa and her father the diamonds, and, the truth must be owned, they made Rosa's eyes sparkle for the first time this eighteen months. He insinuated rather than declared his enormous wealth.

In reply to the old man's eager questions, as the large diamonds lay glittering on the table, and pointed every word, he said that a few of his Hottentots had found these for him; he had made them dig on a diamondiferous part of his estate, just by way of testing the matter; and this was the result; this, and a much larger stone, for which he had received eight thousand pounds from Posno.

"If I was a young man," said Lusignan, "I would go out directly, and dig on your estate."

"I would not let you do anything so paltry," said "le Menteur." "Why, my dear sir, there are no fortunes to be made by grubbing for diamonds; the fortunes are made out of the diamonds, but not in that way. Now, I have thirty thousand acres, and am just concluding a bargain for thirty thousand more, on which I happen to know there are diamonds in a sly corner. Well, of my thirty thousand tried acres, a hundred only are diamondiferous. But I have four thousand thirty-foot claims leased at ten shillings per month. Count that up."

"Why, it is twenty-four thousand pounds a year."

"Excuse me: you must deduct a thousand a year for the expenses of collection. But this is only one phase of the business. I have a large inn upon each of the three great routes from the diamonds to the coast; and these inns are supplied with the produce of my own farms. Mark the effect of the diamonds on property. My sixty thousand acres, which are not diamondiferous, will very soon be worth as much as sixty thousand English acres, say two pounds the acre per annum. That is under the mark, because in Africa the land is not burdened with poor-rates, tithes, and all the other iniquities that crush the English land-owner, as I know to my cost. But that is not all, sir. Would you believe it? even after the diamonds were declared, the people out there had so little foresight that they allowed me to buy land all round Port Elizabeth, Natal, and Cape Town, the three ports through which the world get at the diamonds, and the diamonds get at the world. I have got a girdle of land round those three outlets, bought by the acre; in two years I shall sell it by the yard. Believe me, sir, English fortunes, even the largest, are mere child's play, compared with the colossal wealth a man can accumulate, if he looks beyond these great discoveries to their consequences, and lets others grub for him. But what is the use of it all to me?" said this Bohemian, with a sigh. "I have no taste for luxuries; no love of display. I have not even charity to dispense on a large scale; for there are no deserving poor out there; and the poverty that springs from vice, that I never will encourage."

John heard nearly all this, and took it into the kitchen; and henceforth Adoration was the only word for this prince of men, this rare combination of the Adonis and the millionnaire.

He seldom held such discourses before Rosa; but talked her father into an impression of his boundless

wealth, and half reconciled him to Rosa's refusal of Lord Tadcaster, since here was an old suitor, who, doubtless, with a little encouragement, would soon come on again.

Under this impression, Mr. Lusignan gave Falcon more than a little encouragement, and, as Rosa did not resist, he became a constant visitor at the villa, and was always there from Saturday to Monday.

He exerted all his art of pleasing, and he succeeded. He was welcome to Rosa, and she made no secret of it.

Emily threw herself in his way, and had many a sly talk with him, while he was pretending to be engaged with young Christie. He flattered her, and made her sweet on him, but was too much in love with Rosa, after his fashion, to flirt seriously with her. He thought he might want her services: so he worked upon her after this fashion; asked her if she would like to keep an inn.

"Wouldn't I just?" said she frankly.

Then he told her that, if all went to his wish in England, she should be landlady of one of his inns in the Cape Colony. "And you will get a good husband out there directly," said he. "Beauty is a very uncommon thing in those parts. But I shall ask you to marry somebody who can help you in the business — or not to marry at all."

"I wish I had the inn," said Emily. "Husbands are soon got when a girl hasn't her face only to look to."

"Well, I promise you the inn," said he, "and a good outfit of clothes, and money in both pockets, if you will do me a good turn here in England."

"That I would, sir. But, laws, what can a poor girl like me do for a rich gentleman like you?"

"Can you keep a secret, Emily?"

"Nobody better. You try me, sir."

He looked at her well; saw she was one of those who

could keep a secret, if she chose, and he resolved to risk it.

"Emily, my girl," said he sadly, "I am an unhappy man."

"You, sir! Why, you didn't ought to be."

"I am then. I am in love; and cannot win her."

Then he told the girl a pretty tender tale, that he had loved Mrs. Staines when she was Miss Lusignan, had thought himself beloved in turn, but was rejected; and now, though she was a widow, he had not the courage to court her, her heart was in the grave. He spoke in such a broken voice that the girl's good-nature fought against her little pique at finding how little he was smitten with *her*, and Falcon soon found means to array her cupidity on the side of her good-nature. He gave her a five-pound note to buy gloves, and promised her a fortune, and she undertook to be secret as the grave, and say certain things adroitly to Mrs. Staines.

Accordingly, this young woman omitted no opportunity of dropping a word in favor of Falcon. For one thing, she said to Mrs. Staines, "Mr. Falcon must be very fond of children, ma'am. Why, he worships Master Christie."

"Indeed! I have not observed that."

"Why, no, ma'am. He is rather shy over it; but when he sees us alone, he is sure to come to us, and say, 'Let me look at my child, nurse;' and he do seem fit to eat him. Onst he says to me, 'This boy is my heir, nurse.' What did he mean by that, ma'am?"

"I don't know."

"Is he any kin to you, ma'am?"

"None whatever. You must have misunderstood him. You should not repeat all that people say."

"No, ma'am; only I did think it so odd. Poor gentleman, I don't think he is happy, for all his money."

"He is too good to be unhappy all his life."

"So I think, ma'am."

These conversations were always short, for Rosa, though she was too kind and gentle to snub the girl, was also too delicate to give the least encouragement to her gossip.

But Rosa's was a mind that could be worked upon, and these short but repeated eulogies were not altogether without effect.

At last the insidious Falcon, by not making his approaches in a way to alarm her, acquired her friendship as well as her gratitude; and, in short, she got used to him and liked him. Not being bound by any limit of fact whatever, he entertained her, and took her out of herself a little by extemporaneous pictures; he told her all his thrilling adventures by flood and field, not one of which had ever occurred, yet he made them all sound like truth; he invented strange characters, and set them talking; he went after great whales, and harpooned one, which slapped his boat into fragments with one stroke of its tail; then died, and he hung on by the harpoon protruding from the carcass till a ship came and picked him up. He shot a lion that was carrying off his favorite Hottentot. He encountered another, wounded him with both barrels, was seized, and dragged along the ground, and gave himself up for lost, but kept firing his revolver down the monster's throat till at last he sickened him, and so escaped out of death's maw; he did *not* say how he had fired in the air, and ridden fourteen miles on end, at the bare sight of a lion's cub; but, to compensate that one reserve, plunged into a raging torrent and saved a drowning woman by her long hair, which he caught in his teeth; he rode a race on an ostrich against a friend on a zebra, which went faster, but threw his rider, and screamed with rage at not being able to eat him; he, Falcon, having declined to run unless his friend's zebra

was muzzled. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and shot a wild elephant in the eye; and all this he enlivened with pictorial descriptions of no mean beauty, and as like South Africa as if it had been feu George Robins advertising that continent for sale.

In short, never was there a more voluble and interesting liar by word of mouth, and never was there a more agreeable creature interposed between a bereaved widow and her daily grief and regrets. He diverted her mind from herself, and did her good.

At last, such was the charm of infinite lying, she missed him on the days he did not come, and was brighter when he did come and lie.

Things went smoothly, and so pleasantly, that he would gladly have prolonged this form of courtship for a month or two longer, sooner than risk a premature declaration. But more than one cause drove him to a bolder course; his passion, which increased in violence by contact with its beautiful object, and also a great uneasiness he felt at not hearing from Phœbe. This silence was ominous. He and she knew each other, and what the other was capable of. He knew she was the woman to cross the seas after him, if Staines left the diggings, and any explanation took place that might point to his whereabouts.

These double causes precipitated matters, and at last he began to throw more devotion into his manner; and having so prepared her for a few days, he took his opportunity and said, one day, "We are both unhappy. Give me the right to console you."

She colored high, and said, "You have consoled me more than all the world. But there is a limit; always will be."

One less adroit would have brought her to the point; but this artist only sighed, and let the arrow rankle. By

this means he out-fenced her; for now she had listened to a declaration and not stopped it short.

He played melancholy for a day or two, and then he tried her another way. He said, "I promised your dying husband to be your protector, and a father to his child. I see but one way to keep my word, and that gives me courage to speak — without that I never could. Rosa, I loved you years ago, I am unmarried for your sake. Let me be your husband, and a father to your child."

Rosa shook her head. "I *could* not marry again. I esteem you, I am very grateful to you: and I know I behaved ill to you before. If I could marry again, it would be you. But I cannot. Oh, never! never!"

"Then we both are to be unhappy all our days."

"I shall, as I ought to be. You will not, I hope. I shall miss you sadly; but, for all that, I advise you to leave me. You will carry my everlasting gratitude, go where you will; that and my esteem are all I have to give."

"I will go," said he; "and I hope he who is gone will forgive my want of courage."

"He who is gone took my promise never to marry again."

"Dying men see clearer. I am sure he wished — no matter; it is too delicate." He kissed her hand and went out, a picture of dejection.

Mrs. Staines shed a tear for him.

Nothing was heard of him for several days; and Rosa pitied him more and more, and felt a certain discontent with herself, and doubt whether she had done right.

Matters were in this state, when one morning Emily came screaming in from the garden, "The child! — Master Christie! — Where is he? — Where is he?"

The house was alarmed. The garden searched, the adjoining paddock. The child was gone.

Emily was examined, and owned, with many sobs and hysterical cries, that she had put him down in the summer-house for a minute, while she went to ask the gardener for some balm, balm tea being a favorite drink of hers. "But there was nobody near that I saw," she sobbed.

Further inquiry proved, however, that a tall gypsy woman had been seen prowling about that morning; and suspicion instantly fastened on her. Servants were sent out right and left; but nothing discovered; and the agonized mother, terrified out of her wits, had Falcon telegraphed to immediately.

He came galloping down that very evening, and heard the story. He galloped into Gravesend, and after seeing the police, sent word out he should advertise. He placarded Gravesend with bills, offering a reward of a thousand pounds, the child to be brought to him, and no questions asked.

Meantime the police and many of the neighboring gentry came about the miserable mother with their vague ideas.

Down comes Falcon again next day; tells what he has done, and treats them all with contempt. "Don't you be afraid, Mrs. Staines," said he. "You will get him back. I have taken the sure way. This sort of rogues dare not go near the police, and the police can't find them. You have no enemies; it is only some woman that has fancied a beautiful child. Well, she can have them by the score, for a thousand pounds."

He was the only one with a real idea; the woman saw it, and clung to him. He left late at night.

Next morning out came the advertisements, and he sent her a handful by special messenger. His zeal and activity kept her bereaved heart from utter despair.

At eleven that night came a telegraph: —

"I have got him. Coming down by special train."

Then what a burst of joy and gratitude! The very walls of the house seemed to ring with it as a harp rings with music. A special train, too! he would not let the mother yearn all night.

At one in the morning he drove up with the child and a hired nurse.

Imagine the scene! The mother's screams of joy, her furious kisses, her cooing, her tears, and all the miracles of nature at such a time. The servants all mingled with their employers in the general rapture, and Emily, who was pale as death, cried and sobbed, and said, "Oh, ma'am, I'll never let him out of my sight again, no, not for one minute." Falcon made her a signal, and went out. She met him in the garden.

She was much agitated, and cried, "Oh, you did well to bring him to-day. I could not have kept it another hour. I'm a wretch."

"You are a good kind girl; and here's the fifty pounds I promised you."

"Well, and I have earned it."

"Of course you have. Meet me in the garden to-morrow morning, and I'll show you you have done a kind thing to your mistress, as well as me. And as for the fifty pounds, that is *nothing;* do you hear? it is nothing at all, compared with what I will do for you, if you will be true to me, and hold your tongue."

"Oh! as for that, my tongue shan't betray you, nor shame *me.* You are a gentleman, and I do think you love her, or I would not help you."

So she salved her nursemaid's conscience — with the help of the fifty pounds.

The mother was left to her rapture that night. In the morning Falcon told his tale.

"At two P.M. a man had called on him, and had produced one of his advertisements, and had asked him if

that was all square — no bobbies on the lurk. 'All square, my fine fellow.' 'Well,' said he, 'I suppose you are a gentleman.' 'I am of that opinion too.' 'Well, sir,' says he, 'I know a party as has *found* a young gent as comes werry nigh your advertisement.' 'It will be a very lucky find to that party,' I said, 'if he is on the square.' 'Oh, *we* are always on the square, when the blunt is put down.' 'The blunt for the child, when you like, and where you like,' said I. 'You are the right sort,' said he. 'I am,' replied I. 'Will you come and see if it is all right?' said he. 'In a minute,' said I. Stepped into my bedroom, and loaded my six-shooter."

"What is that?" said Lusignan.

"A revolver with six barrels: by the by, the very same I killed the lion with. Ugh! I never think of that scene without feeling a little quiver; and my nerves are pretty good, too. Well, he took me into an awful part of the town, down a filthy close, into some boozing ken — I beg pardon, some thieves' public-house."

"Oh, my dear friend," said Rosa, "were you not frightened?"

"Shall I tell you the truth, or play the hero? I think I'll tell *you* the truth. I felt a little frightened, lest they should get my money and my life, without my getting my godson: that is what I call him now. Well, two ugly dogs came in, and said, 'Let us see the flimsies, before you see the kid.'

"'That is rather sharp practice, I think,' said I; 'however, here's the swag, and here's the watch-dog.' So I put down the notes, and my hand over them with my revolver cocked, and ready to fire."

"Yes, yes," said Rosa pantingly. "Ah, you were a match for them."

"Well, Mrs. Staines, if I was writing you a novel, I suppose I should tell you the rogues recoiled; but the

truth is they only laughed, and were quite pleased. 'Swell's in earnest,' said one, 'Jem, show the kid.' Jem whistled, and in came a great tall black gypsy woman, with the darling. My heart was in my mouth, but I would not let them see it. I said, 'It is all right. Take half the notes here, and half at the door.' They agreed, and then I did it quick, walked to the door, took the child, gave them the odd notes, and made off as fast as I could, hired a nurse at the hospital — and the rest you know."

"Papa," said Rosa, with enthusiasm, "there is but one man in England who would have got me back my child, and this is he."

When they were alone, Falcon told her she had said words that gladdened his very heart. "You admit I can carry out one half of his wishes ?" said he.

Mrs. Staines said "Yes," then colored high; then, to turn it off, said, "But I cannot allow you to lose that large sum of money. You must let me repay you."

"Large sum of money!" said he. "It is no more to me than sixpence to most people. I don't know what to do with my money; and I never shall know, unless you will make a sacrifice of your own feelings to the wishes of the dead. O Mrs. Staines — Rosa, do pray consider that a man of that wisdom sees the future, and gives wise advice. Sure am I that, if you could overcome your natural repugnance to a second marriage, it would be the best thing for your little boy — I love him already as if he were my own — and in time would bring you peace and comfort, and some day, years hence, even happiness. You are my only love; yet I should never have come to you again if *he* had not sent me. Do consider how strange it all is, and what it points to, and don't let me have the misery of losing you again, when you can do no better now, alas! than reward my fidelity."

She was much moved at this artful appeal, and said, "If I was sure I was obeying his will. But how can I feel that, when we both promised never to wed again?"

"A man's dying words are more sacred than any other. You have his letter."

"Yes, but he does not say 'marry again.'"

"That is what he meant, though."

"How can you say that? How can you know?"

"Because I put the words he said to me together with that short line to you. Mind, I don't say that he did not exaggerate my poor merits; on the contrary, I think he did. But I declare to you that he did hope I should take care of you and your child. Right or wrong, it was his wish, so pray do not deceive yourself on that point."

This made more impression on her than anything else he could say, and she said, "I promise you one thing, I will never marry any man but you."

Instead of pressing her further, as an inferior artist would, he broke into raptures, kissed her hand tenderly, and was in such high spirits, and so voluble all day, that she smiled sweetly on him, and thought to herself, "Poor soul! how happy I could make him with a word!"

As he was always watching her face — a practice he carried further than any person living — he divined that sentiment, and wrought upon it so, that at last he tormented her into saying she would marry him *some day.*

When he had brought her to that, he raged inwardly to think he had not two years to work in; for it was evident she would marry him in time. But no, it had taken him more than four months, close siege, to bring her to that. No word from Phœbe. An ominous dread hung over his own soul. His wife would be upon him, or, worse still, her brother Dick, who he knew would beat him to a mummy on the spot; or, worst of all, the hus-

band of Rosa Staines, who would kill him, or fling him into a prison. He *must* make a push.

In this emergency he used his ally, Mr. Lusignan; he told him Mrs. Staines had promised to marry him, but at some distant date. This would not do; he must look after his enormous interests in the colony, and he was so much in love he could not leave her.

The old gentleman was desperately fond of Falcon, and bent on the match, and he actually consented to give his daughter what Falcon called a little push.

The little push was a very great one, I think.

It consisted in directing the clergyman to call in church the banns of marriage between Reginald Falcon and Rosa Staines.

They were both in church together when this was done. Rosa all but screamed, and then turned red as fire and white as a ghost, by turns. She never stood up again all the service; and in going home refused Falcon's arm, and walked swiftly home by herself. Not that she had the slightest intention of passing this monstrous thing by in silence. On the contrary, her wrath was boiling over, and so hot that she knew she should make a scene in the street if she said a word there.

Once inside the house she turned on Falcon, with a white cheek and a flashing eye, and said, "Follow me, sir, if you please." She led the way to her father's study. "Papa," said she, "I throw myself on your protection. Mr. Falcon has affronted me."

"Oh, Rosa!" cried Falcon, affecting utter dismay.

"Publicly — publicly: he has had the banns of marriage cried in the church, without my permission."

"Don't raise your voice so loud, child. All the house will hear you."

"I choose all the house to hear me. I will not endure it. I will never marry you now — never!"

"Rosa, my child," said Lusignan, "you need not scold poor Falcon, for I am the culprit. It was I who ordered the banns to be cried."

"Oh! papa, you had no right to do such a thing as that."

"I think I had. I exercised parental authority for once, and for your good, and for the good of a true and faithful lover of yours, whom you jilted once, and now you trifle with his affection and his interests. He loves you too well to leave you; yet you know his vast estates and interests require supervision."

"That for his vast estates!" said Rosa contemptuously. "I am not to be driven to the altar like this, when my heart is in the grave. Don't you do it again, papa, or I'll get up and forbid the banns; affront for affront."

"I should like to see that," said the old gentleman dryly.

Rosa vouchsafed no reply, but swept out of the room, with burning cheeks and glittering eyes, and was not seen all day, would not dine with them, in spite of three humble, deprecating notes Falcon sent her.

"Let the spiteful cat alone," said old Lusignan. "You and I will dine together in peace and quiet."

It was a dull dinner; but Falcon took advantage of the opportunity, impregnated the father with his views, and got him to promise to have the banns cried next Sunday. He consented.

Rosa learned next Sunday morning that this was to be done, and her courage failed her. She did not go to church at all.

She cried a great deal, and submitted to violence, as your true women are too apt to do. They had compromised her, and so conquered her. The permanent feelings of gratitude and esteem caused a reaction after

her passion, and she gave up open resistance as hopeless.

Falcon renewed his visits, and was received with the mere sullen languor of a woman who has given in.

The banns were cried a third time.

Then the patient Rosa bought laudanum enough to reunite her to her Christopher, in spite of them all; and having provided herself with this resource, became more cheerful, and even kind and caressing.

She declined to name the day at present, and that was awkward. Nevertheless the conspirators felt sure they should tire her out into doing that, before long; for they saw their way clear, and she was perplexed in the extreme.

In her perplexity, she used to talk to a certain beautiful star she called her Christopher. She loved to fancy he was now an inhabitant of that bright star; and often on a clear night she would look up, and beg for guidance from this star. This I consider foolish: but then I am old and sceptical; she was still young and innocent, and sorely puzzled to know her husband's real will.

I don't suppose the star had anything to do with it, except as a focus of her thoughts; but one fine night, after a long inspection of Christopher's star, she dreamed a dream. She thought that a lovely wedding-dress hung over a chair, that a crown of diamonds as large as almonds sparkled ready for her on the dressing-table, and she was undoing her black gown, and about to take it off, when suddenly the diamonds began to pale, and the white satin dress to melt away, and in its place there rose a pale face and a long beard, and Christopher Staines stood before her, and said quietly, "Is this how you keep your vow?" Then he sank slowly, and the white dress was black, and the diamonds were jet; and she awoke, with his gentle words of remonstrance and his very tones ringing in her ear.

This dream, co-operating with her previous agitation and misgivings, shook her very much; she did not come down-stairs till near dinner-time; and both her father and Falcon, who came as a matter of course to spend his Sunday, were struck with her appearance. She was pale, gloomy, morose, and had an air of desperation about her.

Falcon would not see it; he knew that it is safest to let her sex alone when they look like that; and then the storm sometimes subsides of itself.

After dinner, Rosa retired early; and soon she was heard walking rapidly up and down the dressing-room.

This was quite unusual, and made a noise.

Papa Lusignan thought it inconsiderate; and after a while, remarking gently that he was not particularly fond of sound, he proposed they should smoke the pipe of peace on the lawn.

They did so; but after a while, finding that Falcon was not smoking, he said, "Don't let me detain you. Rosa is alone."

Falcon took the hint, and went to the drawing-room. Rosa met him on the stairs, with a scarf over her shoulders. "I must speak to papa," said she. "Where is he?"

"He is on the lawn, dear Rosa," said Falcon, in his most dulcet tones. He was sure of his ally, and very glad to use him as a buffer to receive the first shock.

So he went into the drawing-room, where all the lights were burning, and quietly took up a book. But he did not read a line; he was too occupied in trying to read his own future.

The mean villain, who is incapable of remorse, is, of all men, most capable of fear. His villany had, to all appearance, reached the goal; for he felt sure that all Rosa's struggles would, sooner or later, succumb to her

sense of gratitude and his strong will and patient temper. But when the victory was won, what a life! He must fly with her to some foreign country, pursued from pillar to post by an enraged husband, and by the offended law. And if he escaped the vindictive foe a year or two, how could he escape that other enemy he knew, and dreaded — poverty? He foresaw he should come to hate the woman he was about to wrong, and she would instantly revenge herself, by making him an exile and, soon or late, a prisoner, or a pauper.

While these misgivings battled with his base but ardent passion, strange things were going on out of doors — but they will be best related in another sequence of events, to which indeed they fairly belong.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Staines and Mrs. Falcon landed at Plymouth, and went up to town by the same train. They parted in London, Staines to go down to Gravesend, Mrs. Falcon to visit her husband's old haunts, and see if she could find him.

She did not find him; but she heard of him, and learned that he always went down to Gravesend from Saturday till Monday.

Notwithstanding all she had said to Staines, the actual information startled her, and gave her a turn. She was obliged to sit down, for her knees seemed to give way. It was but a momentary weakness. She was now a wife and a mother, and had her rights. She said to herself, "My rogue has turned that poor woman's head long before this, no doubt. But I shall go down and just bring him away by the ear."

For once her bitter indignation overpowered every other sentiment, and she lost no time, but late as it was went down to Gravesend, ordered a private sitting-room and bedroom for the night, and took a fly to Kent Villa.

But Christopher Staines had the start of her. He had already gone down to Gravesend with his carpet-bag, left it at the inn, and walked to Kent Villa that lovely summer night, the happiest husband in England.

His heart had never for one instant been disturbed by Mrs. Falcon's monstrous suspicion; he looked on her as a monomaniac; a sensible woman insane on one point, her husband.

When he reached the villa, however, he thought it

prudent to make sure that Falcon had come to England at all, and discharged his commission. He would not run the risk, small as he thought it, of pouncing unexpected on his Rosa, being taken for a ghost, and terrifying her, or exciting her to madness.

Now the premises of Kent Villa were admirably adapted to what they call in war a reconnoissance. The lawn was studded with laurestinas and other shrubs that had grown magnificently in that Kentish air.

Staines had no sooner set his foot on the lawn, than he heard voices; he crept towards them from bush to bush; and standing in impenetrable shade, he saw in the clear moonlight two figures — Mr. Lusignan and Reginald Falcon.

These two dropped out only a word or two at intervals; but what they did say struck Staines as odd. For one thing, Lusignan remarked, "I suppose you will want to go back to the Cape. Such enormous estates as yours will want looking after."

"Enormous estates!" said Staines to himself. "Then they must have grown very fast in a few months."

"Oh, yes," said Falcon; "but I think of showing her a little of Europe first."

Staines thought this still more mysterious; he waited to hear more, but the succeeding remarks were of an ordinary kind.

He noticed, however, that Falcon spoke of his wife by her Christian name, and that neither party mentioned Christopher Staines. He seemed quite out of their little world.

He began to feel a strange chill creep down him.

Presently Falcon went off to join Rosa; and Staines thought it was quite time to ask the old gentleman whether Falcon had executed his commission, or not.

He was only hesitating how to do it, not liking to

pounce in the dark on a man who abhorred everything like excitement, when Rosa herself came flying out in great agitation.

Oh! the thrill he felt at the sight of her! With all his self-possession, he would have sprung forward and taken her in his arms with a mighty cry of love, if she had not immediately spoken words that rooted him to the spot with horror. But she came with the words in her very mouth; "Papa, I am come to tell you I cannot, and will not, marry Mr. Falcon."

"Oh, yes, you will, my dear."

"Never! I'll die sooner. Not that you will care for that. I tell you I saw my Christopher last night — in a dream. He had a beard; but I saw him, oh, so plain; and he said, 'Is this the way you keep your promise?' That is enough for me. I have prayed, again and again, to his star, for light. I am so perplexed and harassed by you all, and you make me believe what you like. Well, I have had a revelation. It is not my poor lost darling's wish I should wed again. I don't believe Mr. Falcon any more. I hear nothing but lies by day. The truth comes to my bedside at night. I will not marry this man."

"Consider, Rosa, your credit is pledged. You must not be always jilting him heartlessly. Dreams! nonsense. There — I love peace. It is no use your storming at me; rave to the moon and the stars, if you like, and when you have done, do pray come in, and behave like a rational woman, who has pledged her faith to an honorable man, and a man of vast estates — a man that nursed your husband in his last illness, found your child, at a great expense, when you had lost him, and merits eternal gratitude, not eternal jilting. I have no patience with you."

The old gentleman retired in high dudgeon.

Staines stood in the black shade of his cedar-tree, rooted to the ground by this revelation of male villany and female credulity.

He did not know what on earth to do. He wanted to kill Falcon, but not to terrify his own wife to death. It was now too clear she thought he was dead.

Rosa watched her father's retiring figure out of sight. "Very well," said she, clenching her teeth; then suddenly she turned, and looked up to heaven "Do you hear?" said she, "my Christie's star? I am a poor perplexed creature. I asked you for a sign, and that very night I saw him in a dream. Why should I marry out of gratitude? Why should I marry one man, when I love another? What does it matter his being dead? I love him too well to be wife to any living man. They persuade me, they coax me, they pull me, they push me. I see they will make me. But I will outwit them. See — see!" and she held up a little phial in the moonlight. "This shall cut the knot for me; this shall keep me true to my Christie, and save me from breaking promises I ought never to have made. This shall unite me once more with him I killed, and loved."

She meant she would kill herself the night before the wedding, which perhaps she would not, and perhaps she would. Who can tell? The weak are violent. But Christopher, seeing the poison so near her lips, was perplexed, took two strides, wrenched it out of her hand, with a snarl of rage, and instantly plunged into the shade again.

Rosa uttered a shriek, and flew into the house.

The farther she got, the more terrified she became, and soon Christopher heard her screaming in the drawing-room in an alarming way. They were like the screams of the insane.

He got terribly anxious, and followed her. All the doors were open.

As he went up-stairs, he heard her cry, "His ghost! his ghost! I have seen his ghost! No, no. I feel his hand upon my arm now. A beard! and so he had in the dream! He is alive. My darling is alive. You have deceived me. You are an impostor — a villain. Out of the house this moment, or he shall kill you."

"Are you mad?" cried Falcon. "How can he be alive, when I saw him dead?"

This was too much. Staines gave the door a blow with his arm, and strode into the apartment, looking white and tremendous.

Falcon saw death in his face; gave a shriek, drew his revolver, and fired at him with as little aim as he had at the lioness; then made for the open window. Staines seized a chair, followed him, and hurled it at him; and the chair and the man went through the window together, and then there was a strange thud heard outside.

Rosa gave a loud scream, and swooned away.

Staines laid his wife flat on the floor, got the women about her, and at last she began to give the usual signs of returning life.

Staines said to the oldest woman there, "If she sees me, she will go off again. Carry her to her room; and tell her, by degrees, that I am alive."

All this time Papa Lusignan had sat trembling and whimpering in a chair, moaning, "This is a painful scene — very painful." But at last an idea struck him — "WHY, YOU HAVE ROBBED THE OFFICE!"

Scarcely was Mrs. Staines out of the room, when a fly drove up, and this was immediately followed by violent and continuous screaming close under the window.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Papa Lusignan.

They ran down, and found Falcon impaled at full length on the spikes of the villa, and Phœbe screaming over him, and trying in vain to lift him off them. He

had struggled a little, in silent terror, but had then fainted from fear and loss of blood, and lying rather inside the rails, which were high, he could not be extricated from the outside.

As soon as his miserable condition was discovered, the servants ran down into the kitchen, and so up to the rails by the area steps. These rails had caught him; one had gone clean through his arm, the other had penetrated the fleshy part of the thigh, and a third pierced his ear.

They got him off; but he was insensible, and the place drenched with his blood.

Phœbe clutched Staines by the arm. "Let me know the worst," said she. "Is he dead?"

Staines examined him, and said "No."

"Can you save him?"

"I?"

"Yes. Who can, if you cannot? Oh, have mercy on me!" and she went on her knees to him, and put her forehead on his knees.

He was touched by her simple faith; and the noble traditions of his profession sided with his gratitude to this injured woman. "My poor friend," said he, "I will do my best, for *your* sake."

He took immediate steps for stanching the blood; and the fly carried Phœbe and her villain to the inn at Gravesend.

Falcon came to on the road; but finding himself alone with Phœbe, shammed unconsciousness of everything but pain.

Staines, being thoroughly enraged with Rosa, yet remembering his solemn vow never to abuse her again, saw her father, and told him to tell her he should think over her conduct quietly, not wishing to be harder upon her than she deserved.

Rosa, who had been screaming, and crying for joy, ever since she came to her senses, was not so much afflicted at this message as one might have expected. He was alive, and all things else were trifles.

Nevertheless, when day after day went by, and not even a line from Christopher, she began to fear he would cast her off entirely; the more so as she heard he was now and then at Gravesend to visit Mrs. Falcon at the inn.

While matters were thus, Uncle Philip burst on her like a bomb. "He is alive! he is alive! he is alive!" And they had a cuddle over it.

"Oh, Uncle Philip! Have you seen him?"

"Seen him? Yes. He caught me on the hop, just as I came in from Italy. I took him for a ghost."

"Oh, weren't you frightened?"

"Not a bit. I don't mind ghosts. I'd have half a dozen to dinner every day, if I might choose 'em. I couldn't stand stupid ones. But I say, his temper isn't improved by all this dying: he is in an awful rage with you; and what for?"

"O uncle! what for? Because I'm the vilest of women!"

"Vilest of fiddlesticks! It's his fault, not yours. Shouldn't have died. It's always a dangerous experiment."

"*I* shall die if he will not forgive me. He keeps away from me and from his child."

"I'll tell you. He heard, in Gravesend, your banns had been cried: that has moved the peevish fellow's bile."

"It was done without my consent. Papa will tell you so; and, O uncle, if you knew the arts, the forged letter in my darling's hand, the way he wrought on me! O villain! villain! Uncle, forgive your poor silly niece,

that the world is too wicked and too clever for her to live in."

"Because you are too good and innocent," said Uncle Philip. "There, don't you be down-hearted. I'll soon bring you two together again — a couple of ninnies. I'll tell you what is the first thing: you must come and live with me. Come at once, bag and baggage. He won't show here, the sulky brute."

Philip Staines had a large house in Cavendish Square, a crusty old patient, like himself, had left him. It was his humor to live in a corner of this mansion, though the whole was capitally furnished by his judicious purchases at auctions.

He gave Rosa and her boy and his nurse the entire first floor, and told her she was there for life. "Look here," said he, "this last affair has opened my eyes. Such women as you are the sweeteners of existence. You leave my roof no more. Your husband will make the same discovery. Let him run about, and be miserable a bit. He will have to come to book."

She shook her head sadly.

"My Christopher will never say a harsh word to me. All the worse for me. He will quietly abandon a creature so inferior to him."

"Stuff!"

Now, she was always running to the window, in hope that Christopher would call on his uncle, and that she might see him; and one day she gave a scream so eloquent, Philip knew what it meant. "Get you behind that screen, you and your boy," said he, "and be as still as mice. Stop! give me that letter the scoundrel forged, and the ring."

This was hardly done, and Rosa out of sight, and trembling from head to foot, when Christopher was announced. Philip received him very affectionately, but wasted no time.

"Been to Kent Villa yet?"

"No," was the grim reply.

"Why not?"

"Because I have sworn never to say an angry word to her again; and, if I was to go there, I should say a good many angry ones. Oh, when I think that her folly drove me to sea, to do my best for her, and that I was nearer death for that woman than ever man was, and lost my reason for her, and went through toil and privations, hunger, exile, mainly for her, and then to find the banns cried in open church, with that scoundrel! — say no more, uncle. I shall never reproach her, and never forgive her."

"She was deceived."

"I don't doubt that; but nobody has a right to be so great a fool as all that."

"It was not her folly, but her innocence, that was imposed on. You a philosopher, and not know that wisdom itself is sometimes imposed on, and deceived by cunning folly! Have you forgotten your Milton? —

> "'At Wisdom's gate, Suspicion sleeps,
> And deems no ill where no ill seems.'

Come, come! are are sure you are not a little to blame? Did you write home the moment you found you were not dead?"

Christopher colored high.

"Evidently not," said the keen old man. "Ah, my fine fellow! have I found the flaw in your own armor?"

"I did wrong, but it was for her. I sinned for her. I could not bear her to be without money, and I knew the insurance — I sinned for her. She has sinned *against* me."

"And she had much better have sinned against God, hadn't she? He is more forgiving than we perfect

creatures that cheat insurance companies. And so, my fine fellow, you hid the truth from her for two or three months."

No answer.

"Strike off those two or three months; would the banns have ever been cried?"

"Well, uncle," said Christopher, hard pressed, "I am glad she has got a champion; and I hope you will always keep your eye on her."

"I mean to."

"Good-morning."

"No; don't be in a hurry. I have something else to say, not so provoking. Do you know the arts by which she was made to believe you wished her to marry again?"

"I wished her to marry again! Are you mad, uncle?"

"Whose handwriting is on this envelope?"

"Mine, to be sure."

"Now, read the letter."

Christopher read the forged letter.

"Oh, monstrous!"

"This was given her with your ruby ring, and a tale so artful that nothing we read about the devil comes near it. This was what did it. The Earl of Tadcaster brought her title, and wealth, and love."

"What, he too! The little cub I saved, and lost myself for — blank him! blank him!"

"Why, you stupid ninny! you forget you were dead; and he could not help loving her. How could he? Well, but you see she refused him. And why? because he came without a forged letter from *you*. Do you doubt her love for you?"

"Of course I do. She never loved me as I loved her."

"Christopher, don't you say that before me, or you and I shall quarrel. Poor girl! she lay, in my sight, as near death for you as you were for her. I'll show you something."

He went to a cabinet, and took out a silver paper; he unpinned it, and laid Rosa's beautiful black hair upon her husband's knees. "Look at that, you hard-hearted brute!" he roared to Christopher, who sat, anything but hard-hearted, his eyes filling fast, at the sad proof of his wife's love and suffering.

Rosa could bear no more. She came out with her boy in her hand. "O uncle, do not speak harshly to him, or you will kill me quite!"

She came across the room, a picture of timidity and penitence, with her whole eloquent body bent forward at an angle. She kneeled at his knees, with streaming eyes, and held her boy up to him: "Plead for your poor mother, my darling. She mourns her fault, and will never excuse it."

The cause was soon decided. All Philip's logic was nothing, compared with mighty nature. Christopher gave one great sob, and took his darling to his heart, without one word; and he and Rosa clung together, and cried over each other. Philip slipped out of the room, and left the restored ones together.

I have something more to say about my hero and heroine, but must first deal with other characters, not wholly uninteresting to the reader, I hope.

Dr. Staines directed Phœbe Falcon how to treat her husband. No medicine, no stimulants; very wholesome food, in moderation, and the temperature of the body regulated by tepid water. Under these instructions, the injured but still devoted wife was the real healer. He pulled through, but was lame for life, and ridiculously lame, for he went with a spring halt, — a sort of hop-and-go-one that made the girls laugh, and vexed Adonis.

Phœbe found the diamonds, and offered them all to Staines, in expiation of his villany. "See," she said, "he has only spent one."

Staines said he was glad of it, for her sake, for he must be just to his own family. He sold them for three thousand two hundred pounds; but for the big diamond he got twelve thousand pounds, and I believe it was worth double the money.

Counting the two sums, and deducting six hundred for the stone Mr. Falcon had embezzled, he gave her over seven thousand pounds.

She stared at him, and changed color at so large a sum. "But I have no claim on that, sir."

"That is a good joke," said he. "Why, you and I are partners in the whole thing — you and I and Dick. Was it not with his horse and rifle I bought the big diamond? Poor dear, honest, manly Dick! No, the money is honestly yours, Mrs. Falcon; but don't trust a penny to your husband."

"He will never see it, sir. I shall take him back, and give him all his heart can ask for, with this; but he will be little more than a servant in the house now, as long as Dick is single; I know that;" and she could still cry at the humiliation of her villain.

Staines made her promise to write to him; and she did write him a sweet, womanly letter, to say that they were making an enormous fortune, and hoped to end their days in England. Dick sent his kind love and thanks.

I will add, what she only said by implication, that she was happy after all. She still contrived to love the thing she could not respect. Once, when an officious friend pitied her for her husband's lameness, she said, "Find me a face like his. The lamer the better; he can't run after the girls, like *some*."

Dr. Staines called on Lady Cicely Treherne; the footman stared. He left his card.

A week afterwards, she called on him. She had a

pink tinge in her cheeks, a general animation, and her face full of brightness and archness.

"Bless me!" said he bluntly, "is this you? How you are improved!"

"Yes," said she; "and I am come to thank you for your pwescwiption: I followed it to the lettaa."

"Woe is me! I have forgotten it."

"You diwected me to mawwy a nice man."

"Never: I hate a nice man."

"No, no — an Iwishman: and I have done it."

"Good gracious! you don't mean that! I must be more cautious in my prescriptions. After all, it seems to agree."

"Admiwably."

"He loves you?"

"To distwaction."

"He amuses you?"

"Pwodigiously. Come and see."

Dr. and Mrs. Staines live with Uncle Philip. The insurance money is returned, but the diamond money makes them very easy. Staines follows his profession now under great advantages: a noble house, rent free; the curiosity that attaches to a man who has been canted out of a ship in mid-ocean, and lives to tell it; and then Lord Tadcaster, married into another noble house, swears by him, and talks of him; so does Lady Cicely Munster, late Treherne; and when such friends as these are warm, it makes a physician the centre of an important *clientèle;* but his best friend of all is his unflagging industry, and his truly wonderful diagnosis, which resembles divination. He has the ball at his feet, and above all, that without which worldly success soon palls, a happy home, a fireside warm with sympathy.

Mrs. Staines is an admiring, sympathizing wife, and

an admirable housekeeper. She still utters inadvertencies now and then, commits new errors at odd times, but never repeats them when exposed. Observing which docility, Uncle Philip has been heard to express a fear that, in twenty years, she will be the wisest woman in England. "But, thank heaven!" he adds, "I shall be gone before that."

Her conduct and conversation afford this cynic constant food for observation; and he has delivered himself oracularly at various stages of the study: but I cannot say that his observations, taken as a whole, present that consistency which entitles them to be regarded as a body of philosophy. Examples: In the second month after Mrs. Staines came to live with him, he delivered himself thus: "My niece Rosa is an anomaly. She gives you the impression she is shallow. Mind your eye: in one moment she will take you out of your depth or any man's depth. She is like those country streams I used to fish for pike when I was young; you go along, seeing the bottom everywhere; but presently you come to a corner, and it is fifteen deep all in a moment, and souse you go over head and ears: that's my niece Rosa."

In six months he had got to this — and, mind you, each successive dogma was delivered in a loud, aggressive tone, and in sublime oblivion of the preceding oracle — "My niece Rosa is the most artful woman. (You may haw! haw! haw! as much as you like. You have not found out her little game — I have.) What is the aim of all women? To be beloved by an unconscionable number of people. Well, she sets up for a simpleton, and so disarms all the brilliant people, and they love her. Everybody loves her. Just you put her down in a room with six clever women, and you will see who is the favorite. She looks as shallow as a pond, and she is as deep as the ocean."

At the end of the year he threw off the mask altogether. "The great sweetener of a man's life," said he, "is 'a simpleton.' I shall not go abroad any more; my house has become attractive: I've got a simpleton. When I have a headache, her eyes fill with tender concern, and she hovers about me and pesters me with pillows: when I am cross with her, she is afraid I am ill. When I die, and leave her a lot of money, she will howl for months, and say I don't want his money: 'I waw-waw-waw-waw-want my Uncle Philip, to love me, and scold me.' One day she told me, with a sigh, I hadn't lectured her for a month. 'I am afraid I have offended you,' says she, 'or else worn you out, dear.' When I am well, give me a simpleton, to make me laugh. When I am ill, give me a simpleton to soothe me with her innocent tenderness. A simpleton shall wipe the dews of death, and close my eyes: and when I cross the river of death, let me be met by a band of the heavenly host, who were all simpletons here on earth, and too good for such a hole, so now they are in heaven, and their garments always white — because there are no laundresses there."

Arrived at this point, the Anglo-Saxon race will retire, grinning, to fresh pastures, and leave this champion of "a Simpleton," to thunder paradoxes in a desert.

WHITE LIES.

WHITE LIES.

CHAPTER I.

Towards the close of the last century the Baron de Beaurepaire lived in the château of that name in Brittany. His family was of prodigious antiquity; seven successive barons had already flourished on this spot when a younger son of the house accompanied his neighbor the Duke of Normandy in his descent on England, and was rewarded by a grant of English land, on which he dug a mote and built a château, and called it Beaurepaire (the worthy Saxons turned this into Borreper without delay). Since that day more than twenty gentlemen of the same lineage had held in turn the original château and lands, and handed them down to their present lord.

Thus rooted in his native Brittany, Henri Lionel Marie St. Quentin de Beaurepaire was as fortunate as any man can be pronounced before he dies. He had health, rank, a good income, a fair domain, a goodly house, a loving wife, and two lovely young daughters, all veneration and affection. Two months every year he visited the Faubourg St. Germain and the Court. At both every gentleman and every lacquey knew his name, and his face: his return to Brittany after this short absence was celebrated by a rustic *fête.*

Above all, Monsieur de Beaurepaire possessed that treasure of treasures, content. He hunted no heart-burns. Ambition did not tempt him; why should he listen to long speeches, and court the unworthy, and descend to intrigue, for so precarious and equivocal a prize as a place in the Government, when he could be De Beaurepaire without trouble or loss of self-respect? Social ambition could get little hold of him; let parvenus give balls half in doors, half out, and light two thousand lamps, and waste their substance battling and manœuvring for fashionable distinction; he had nothing to gain by such foolery, nothing to lose by modest living; he was the twenty-ninth Baron of Beaurepaire. So wise, so proud, so little vain, so strong in health and wealth and honor, one would have said nothing less than an earthquake could shake this gentleman and his house. Yet both were shaken, though rooted by centuries to the soil; and by no vulgar earthquake.

For years France had bowed in silence beneath two galling burdens — a selfish and corrupt monarchy, and a multitudinous, privileged, lazy, and oppressive aristocracy, by whom the peasant was handled like a Russian serf. [Said peasant is now the principal proprietor of the soil.]

The lower orders rose upon their oppressors, and soon showed themselves far blacker specimens of the same breed. Law, religion, humanity, and common sense, hid their faces; innocent blood flowed in a stream, and terror reigned. To Monsieur de Beaurepaire these republicans — murderers of women, children, and kings — seemed the most horrible monsters nature had ever produced; he put on black, and retired from society; he felled timber, and raised large sums of money upon his estate. And one day he mounted his charger, and disappeared from the château.

Three months after this, a cavalier, dusty and pale, rode into the courtyard of Beaurepaire, and asked to see the baroness. She came to him; he hung his head and held her out a letter.

It contained a few sad words from Monsieur de Larochejaquelin. The baron had just fallen in La Vendee, fighting for the Crown.

From that hour till her death the baroness wore black.

The mourner would have been arrested, and perhaps beheaded, but for a friend, the last in the world on whom the family reckoned for any solid aid. Dr. Aubertin had lived in the château twenty years. He was a man of science, and did not care a button for money; so he had retired from the practice of medicine, and pursued his researches at ease under the baron's roof. They all loved him, and laughed at his occasional reveries, in the days of prosperity; and now, in one great crisis, the *protégé* became the protector, to their astonishment and his own. But it was an age of ups and downs. This amiable theorist was one of the oldest verbal republicans in Europe. And why not? In theory a republic is the perfect form of government: it is merely in practice that it is impossible; it is only upon going off paper into reality, and trying actually to self-govern limited nations, after heating them white hot with the fire of politics and the bellows of bombast — that the thing resolves itself into bloodshed silvered with moonshine.

Dr. Aubertin had for years talked and written speculative republicanism. So they applied to him whether the baroness shared her husband's opinions, and he boldly assured them she did not; he added, "She is a pupil of mine." On this audacious statement they contented themselves with laying a heavy fine on the lands of Beaurepaire.

Assignats were abundant, but good mercantile paper, a notorious coward, had made itself wings and fled, and specie was creeping into strong boxes like a startled rabbit into its hole. The fine was paid; but Beaurepaire had to be heavily mortgaged, and the loan bore a high rate of interest. This, with the baron's previous mortgages, swamped the estate.

The baroness sold her carriage and horses, and she and her daughters prepared to deny themselves all but the bare necessaries of life, and pay off their debts if possible. On this their dependants fell away from them; their fair-weather friends came no longer near them; and many a flush of indignation crossed their brows, and many an aching pang their hearts, as adversity revealed the baseness and inconstancy of common people high or low.

When the other servants had retired with their wages, one Jacintha remained behind, and begged permission to speak to the baroness.

"What would you with me, my child?" asked that lady, with an accent in which a shade of surprise mingled with great politeness.

"Forgive me, madame," began Jacintha, with a formal courtesy; "but how can I leave you, and Mademoiselle Josephine, and Mademoiselle Rose? I was born at Beaurepaire; my mother died in the château: my father died in the village; but he had meat every day from the baron's own table, and fuel from the baron's wood, and died blessing the house of Beaurepaire. I *cannot* go. The others are gone because prosperity is here no longer. Let it be so; I will stay till the sun shines again upon the château, and then you shall send me away if you are bent on it; but not now, my ladies — oh, not now! Oh! oh! oh!" And the warm-hearted girl burst out sobbing ungracefully.

"My child," said the baroness, "these sentiments touch me, and honor you. But retire, if you please, while I consult my daughters."

Jacintha cut her sobs dead short, and retreated with a formal reverence.

The consultation consisted of the baroness opening her arms, and both her daughters embracing her at once. Proud as they were, they wept with joy at having made one friend amongst all their servants. Jacintha stayed.

As months rolled on, Rose de Beaurepaire recovered her natural gayety in spite of bereavement and poverty; so strong are youth, and health, and temperament. But her elder sister had a grief all her own: Captain Dujardin, a gallant young officer, well-born, and his own master, had courted her with her parents' consent; and, even when the baron began to look coldly on the soldier of the Republic, young Dujardin, though too proud to encounter the baron's irony and looks of scorn, would not yield love to pique. He came no more to the château, but he would wait hours and hours on the path to the little oratory in the park, on the bare chance of a passing word or even a kind look from Josephine. So much devotion gradually won a heart which in happier times she had been half encouraged to give him; and, when he left her on a military service of uncommon danger, the woman's reserve melted, and, in that moment of mutual grief and passion, she vowed she loved him better than all the world.

Letters from the camp breathing a devotion little short of worship fed her attachment; and more than one public mention of his name and services made her proud as well as fond of the fiery young soldier.

Still she did not open her heart to her parents. The baron, alive at that time, was exasperated against the Republic, and all who served it; and, as for the baroness, she was of the old school: a passionate love in a lady's

heart before marriage was contrary to her notions of etiquette. Josephine loved Rose very tenderly; but shrank with modest delicacy from making her a confidante of feelings, the bare relation of which leaves the female hearer a child no longer.

So she hid her heart, and delicious first love nestled deep in her nature, and thrilled in every secret vein and fibre.

They had parted two years, and he had joined the army of the Pyrenees about one month, when suddenly all correspondence ceased on his part.

Restless anxiety rose into terror as this silence continued; and starting and trembling at every sound, and edging to the window at every footstep, Josephine expected hourly the tidings of her lover's death.

Months rolled on in silence.

Then a new torture came. He must not be dead but unfaithful. At this all the pride of her race was fired in her.

The struggle between love and ire was almost too much for nature: violently gay and moody by turns she alarmed both her mother and the good Dr. Aubertin. The latter was not, I think, quite without suspicion of the truth; however, he simply prescribed change of air and place; she must go to Frejus, a watering-place distant about five leagues. Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire yielded a languid assent. To her all places were alike.

But when they returned from Frejus a change had taken place. Rose had extracted her sister's secret, and was a changed girl. Pity, and the keen sense of Josephine's wrong, had raised her sisterly love to a passion. The great-hearted girl hovered about her lovely, suffering sister like an angel, and paid her the tender attentions of a devoted lover, and hated Camille Dujardin with all her heart: hated him all the more that she saw

Josephine shrink even from her whenever she inveighed against him.

At last Rose heard some news of the truant lover. The fact is, this young lady was as intelligent as she was inexperienced; and she had asked Jacintha to tell Dard to talk to every soldier that passed through the village, and ask him if he knew anything about Captain Dujardin of the 17th regiment. Dard cross-examined about a hundred invalided warriors, who did not even recognize the captain's name; but at last, by extraordinary luck, he actually did fall in with two, who told him strange news about Captain Dujardin. And so then Dard told Jacintha; and Jacintha soon had the men into the kitchen and told Rose. Rose ran to tell Josephine; but stopped in the passage, and turned suddenly very cold. Her courage failed her; she feared Josephine would not take the news as she ought; and perhaps would not love her so well if *she* told her; so she thought to herself she would let the soldiers tell their own tale. She went into the room where Josephine was reading to the baroness and Dr. Aubertin; she sat quietly down; but at the first opportunity made Josephine one of those imperceptible signals which women, and above all, sisters, have reduced to so subtle a system. This done, she went carelessly out: and Josephine in due course followed her, and found her at the door.

"What is it?" said Josephine, earnestly.

"Have you courage?" was Rose's reply.

"He is dead?" said Josephine, turning pale as ashes.

"No, no;" said Rose hastily; "he is alive. But you will need all your courage."

"Since he lives I fear nothing," said Josephine; and stood there and quivered from head to foot. Rose, with pitying looks, took her by the hand and drew her in silence towards the kitchen.

Josephine yielded a mute submission at first; but at the very door hung back and faltered, "He loves another; he is married: let me go." Rose made no reply, but left her there and went into the kitchen and found two dragoons seated round a bottle of wine. They rose and saluted her.

"Be seated, my brave men," said she; "only please tell me what you told Jacintha about Captain Dujardin."

"Don't stain your mouth with the captain, my little lady. He is a traitor."

"How do you know?"

"Marcellus! mademoiselle asks us how we know Captain Dujardin to be a traitor. Speak."

Marcellus, thus appealed to, told Rose after his own fashion that he knew the captain well: that one day the captain rode out of the camp and never returned: that at first great anxiety was felt on his behalf, for the captain was a great favorite, and passed for the smartest soldier in the division: that after awhile anxiety gave place to some very awkward suspicions, and these suspicions it was his lot and his comrade's here to confirm. About a month later he and the said comrade and two more were sent, well mounted, to reconnoitre a Spanish village. At the door of a little inn they caught sight of a French uniform. This so excited their curiosity that he went forward nearer than prudent, and distinctly recognized Captain Dujardin seated at a table drinking between two guerillas; then he rode back and told the others, who then came up and satisfied themselves it was so: that if any of the party had entertained a doubt, it was removed in an unpleasant way; he, Marcellus, disgusted at the sight of a French uniform drinking among Spaniards, took down his carabine and fired at the group as carefully as a somewhat restive horse permitted: at this, as if by magic, a score or so of guerillas poured out

from Heaven knows where, musket in hand, and delivered a volley; the officer in command of the party fell dead, Jean Jacques here got a broken arm, and his own horse was wounded in two places, and fell from loss of blood a few furlongs from the French camp, to the neighborhood of which the vagabonds pursued them, hallooing and shouting and firing like barbarous banditti as they were.

"However, here I am," concluded Marcellus, "invalided for awhile, my lady, but not expended yet: we will soon dash in among them again for death or glory. Meantime," concluded he, filling both glasses, "let us drink to the eyes of beauty (military salute); and to the renown of France; and double damnation to all her traitors, like that Captain Dujardin; whose neck may the devil twist."

Ere they could drink to this energetic toast, a low wail at the door, like a dying hare's, arrested the glasses on their road, and the rough soldiers stood transfixed, and looked at one another in some dismay. Rose flew to the door with a face full of concern.

Josephine was gone.

Then Rose had the tact and resolution to say a few kind, encouraging words to the soldiers, and bid Jacintha be hospitable to them. This done she darted up-stairs after Josephine; she reached the main corridor just in time to see her creep along it with the air and carriage of a woman of fifty, and enter her own room.

Rose followed softly with wet eyes, and turned the handle gently. But the door was locked.

"Josephine! Josephine!"

No answer.

"I want to speak to you. I am frightened. Oh, do not be alone."

A choking voice answered, "Give me a little while to

draw my breath." Rose sank down at the door, and sat close to it, with her head against it, sobbing bitterly. She was hurt at not being let in; such a friend as she had proved herself. But this personal feeling was only a fraction of her grief and anxiety.

A good half hour elapsed ere Josephine, pale and stern as no one had ever seen her till that hour, suddenly opened the door. She started at sight of Rose couched sorrowful on the threshold; her stern look relaxed into tender love and pity; she sank, blushing, on her knees, and took her sister's head quickly to her bosom. "Oh, my little love, have you been here all this time?" — "Oh! oh! oh!" was all the little love could reply. Then the deserted one, still kneeling, took Rose in her lap, and caressed and comforted her, and poured words of gratitude and affection over her like a warm shower.

They rose hand in hand.

Then Rose suddenly seized Josephine, and looked long and anxiously down into her eyes. They flashed fire under the scrutiny. "Yes, it is all over; I could not despise and love. I am dead to him, as he is dead to France."

This was joyful news to Rose. "I hoped it would be so," said she; "but you frightened me. My noble sister, were I ever to lose your esteem, I should die. Oh, how awful yet how beautiful is your scorn. For worlds I would not be that Cam" — Josephine laid her hand imperiously on Rose's mouth. "To mention his name to me will be to insult me; De Beaurepaire I am, and a Frenchwoman. Come, dear, let us go down and comfort our mother."

They went down; and this patient sufferer, and high-minded conqueror, of her own accord took up a commonplace book, and read aloud for two mortal hours to her mother and Aubertin. Her voice only wavered twice.

To feel that life is ended; to wish existence, too, had ceased; and so to sit down, an aching hollow, and take a part and sham an interest in twaddle to please others; such are woman's feats. How like nothing at all they look!

A man would rather sit on the buffer of a steam-engine and ride at the Great Redan.

Rose sat at her elbow, a little behind her, and turned the leaves, and on one pretence or other held Josephine's hand nearly all the rest of the day. Its delicate fibres remained tense, like a greyhound's sinews after a race, and the blue veins rose to sight in it, though her voice and eyes were mastered.

So keen was the strife, so matched the antagonists, so hard the victory.

For ire and scorn are mighty. And noble blood in a noble heart is heroic. And Love is a giant.

CHAPTER II.

The French provinces were now organized upon a half military plan, by which all the local authorities radiated towards a centre of government. By-the-by, this feature has survived subsequent revolutions and political changes.

In days of change, youth is at a premium; because, though experience is valuable, the experience of one order of things unfits ordinary men for another order of things. So a good many old fogies in ffice were shown the door, and a good deal of youth and energy infused into the veins of provincial government. For instance, Edouard Riviere, who had but just completed his education with singular *éclat* at a military school, was one fine day ordered into Brittany to fill a responsible post under Commandant Raynal, a blunt, rough soldier, that had risen from the ranks, and bore a much higher character for zeal and moral integrity than for affability.

This officer was the son of a widow that kept a grocer's shop in Paris. She intended him for spice, but he thirsted for glory, and vexed her. So she yielded, as mothers will.

In the armies of the republic a good soldier rose with unparalleled certainty, and rapidity, too; for when soldiers are being mowed down like oats, it is a glorious time for such of them as keep their feet. Raynal mounted fast, and used to write to his mother, and joke her about the army being such a bad profession; and, as he was all for glory, not money, he lived with Spartan frugality, and saved half his pay and all his prize money for the old lady in Paris.

But this prosperous man had to endure a deep disappointment; on the very day he was made commandant and one of the general's aides-de-camp, came a letter into the camp. His mother was dead after a short illness. This was a terrible blow to the simple, rugged soldier, who had never had much time nor inclination to flirt with a lot of girls, and toughen his heart. He came back to Paris honored and rich, but downcast. The old home, empty of his mother, seemed to him not to have the old look. It made him sadder. To cheer him up they brought him much money. The widow's trade had taken a wonderful start the last few years, and she had been playing the same game as he had, living on tenpence a day, and saving all for him. This made him sadder, if anything.

"What," said he, "have we both been scraping all this dross together for? I would give it all to sit one hour by the fire, with her hand in mine, and hear her say, 'Scamp, you made me unhappy when you were young, but I have lived to be proud of you.'"

He applied for active service, no matter what: obtained at once this post in Brittany, and threw himself into it with that honest zeal and activity, which are the best earthly medicine for all our griefs. He was busy writing, when young Riviero first presented himself. He looked up for a moment, and eyed him, to take his measure; then put into his hand a report by young Nicole, a subordinate filling a post of the same nature as Riviere's; and bade him analyze that report on the spot: with this he instantly resumed his own work.

Edouard Riviere was an adept at this sort of task, and soon handed him a neat analysis. Raynal ran his eye over it, nodded cold approval, and told him to take this for the present as a guide as to his own duties. He then pointed to a map on which Riviere's district was

marked in blue ink, and bade him find the centre of it. Edouard took a pair of compasses off the table, and soon discovered that the village of Beaurepaire was his centre. "Then quarter yourself at Beaurepaire; and good-day," said Raynal.

The château was in sight from Riviere's quarters, and he soon learned that it belonged to a royalist widow and her daughters, who all three held themselves quite aloof from the rest of the world. "Ah," said the young citizen, "I see. If these *rococo* citizens play that game with me, I shall have to take them down." Thus a fresh peril menaced this family, on whose hearts and fortunes such heavy blows had fallen.

One evening our young official, after a day spent in the service of the country, deigned to take a little stroll to relieve the cares of administration. He imprinted on his beardless face the expression of a wearied statesman, and strolled through an admiring village. The men pretended veneration from policy; the women, whose views of this great man were shallower but more sincere, smiled approval of his airs; and the young puppy affected to take no notice of either sex.

Outside the village, Publicola suddenly encountered two young ladies, who resembled nothing he had hitherto met with in his district; they were dressed in black, and with extreme simplicity; but their easy grace and composure, and the refined sentiment of their gentle faces, told at a glance they belonged to the high nobility. Publicola divined them at once, and involuntarily raised his hat to so much beauty and dignity, instead of poking it with a finger as usual. On this the ladies instantly courtesied to him after the manner of their party, with a sweep and a majesty, and a precision of politeness, that the pup would have laughed at if he had heard of it; but seeing it done, and well done, and by lovely women

of rank, he was taken aback by it, and lifted his hat again, and bowed again after he had gone by, and was generally flustered. In short, instead of a member of the Consular Government saluting private individuals of a decayed party that existed only by sufferance, a handsome, vain, good-natured boy had met two self-possessed young ladies of distinction and breeding, and had cut the usual figure.

For the next hundred yards his cheeks burned and his vanity cooled. But bumptiousness is elastic in France, as in England, and doubtless among the Esquimaux. "Well, they are pretty girls," says he to himself. "I never saw two such pretty girls together; they will do for me to flirt with while I am banished to this Arcadia." Banished from school, I beg to observe.

And "awful beauty" being no longer in sight, Mr. Edouard resolved he would flirt with them to their hearts' content. But there are ladies with whom a certain preliminary is required before you can flirt with them. You must be on speaking terms. How was this to be managed?

He used to watch at his window with a telescope, and whenever the sisters came out of their own grounds, which unfortunately was not above twice a week, he would throw himself in their way by the merest accident, and pay them a dignified and courteous salute, which he had carefully got up before a mirror in the privacy of his own chamber.

One day, as he took off his hat to the young ladies, there broke from one of them a smile, so sudden, sweet, and vivid, that he seemed to feel it smite him first on the eyes then in the heart. He could not sleep for this smile.

Yet he had seen many smilers; but to be sure most of them smiled without effect, because they smiled eter-

nally; they seemed cast with their mouths open, and their pretty teeth forever in sight; and this has a saddening influence on a man of sense — when it has any. But here a fair, pensive face had brightened at sight of him; a lovely countenance, on which circumstances, not nature, had impressed gravity, had sprung back to its natural gayety for a moment, and had thrilled and bewitched the beholder.

The next Sunday he went to church — and there worshipped — whom? Cupid. He smarted for his heathenism; for the young ladies went with higher motives, and took no notice of him. They lowered their long silken lashes over one breviary, and scarcely observed the handsome citizen. Meantime he, contemplating their pious beauty with earthly eyes, was drinking long draughts of intoxicating passion. And when after the service they each took an arm of Dr. Aubertin, and he with the air of an admiral convoying two ships choke-full of specie, conducted his precious charge away home, our young citizen felt jealous, and all but hated the worthy doctor.

This went on till he became listless and dejected on the days he did not see them. Then he asked himself whether he was not a cowardly fool to keep at such a distance. After all he was a man in authority. His friendship was not to be despised, least of all by a family suspected of disaffection to the state.

He put on his glossy beaver with enormous brim, high curved; his blue coat with brass buttons; his white waistcoat, gray breeches, and top-boots; and marched up to the château of Beaurepaire, and sent in his card with his name and office inscribed.

Jacintha took it, bestowed a glance of undisguised admiration on the young Adonis, and carried it to the baroness. That lady sent her promptly down again with a black-edged note to this effect.

Highly flattered by Monsieur de Riviere's visit, the baroness must inform him that she receives none but old acquaintances, in the present grief of the family, and of the KINGDOM.

Young Riviere was cruelly mortified by this rebuff. He went off hurriedly, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Cursed aristocrats! We have done well to pull you down, and we will have you lower still. How I despise myself for giving any one the chance to affront me thus. The haughty old fool; if she had known her interest, she would have been too glad to make a powerful friend. These royalists are in a ticklish position; I can tell her that. She calls me De Riviere; that implies nobody without a 'De' to their name would have the presumption to visit her old tumble-down house. Well, it is a lesson; I am a republican, and the Commonwealth trusts and honors me; yet I am so ungrateful as to go out of the way to be civil to her enemies, to royalists; as if those worn-out creatures had hearts, as if they could comprehend the struggle that took place in my mind between duty, and generosity to the fallen, before I could make the first overture to their acquaintance; as if they could understand the politeness of the heart, or anything nobler than curving and ducking and heartless etiquette. This is the last notice I will ever take of that old woman, unless it is to denounce her."

He walked home to the town very fast, his heart boiling, and his lips compressed, and his brow knitted.

To this mood succeeded a sullen and bitter one. He was generous, but vain, and his love had humiliated him so bitterly, he resolved to tear it out of his heart. He absented himself from church; he met the young ladies no more. He struggled fiercely with his passion; he went about dogged, silent, and sighing. Presently he devoted his leisure hours to shooting partridges instead

of ladies. And he was right; partridges cannot shoot back; whereas beautiful women, like Cupid, are all archers more or less, and often with one arrow from eye or lip do more execution than they have suffered from several discharges of our small shot.

In these excursions, Edouard was generally accompanied by a thick-set rustic called Dard, who, I believe, purposes to reveal his own character to you, and so save me that trouble.

One fine afternoon, about four o'clock, this pair burst remorselessly through a fence, and landed in the road opposite Bigot's Auberge; a long low house, with "Ici on loge à pied et à cheval," written all across it in gigantic letters. Riviere was for moving homeward, but Dard halted and complained dismally of "the soldier's gripes." The statesman had never heard of that complaint, so Dard explained that the *vulgar* name for it was hunger. "And only smell," said he, "the soup is just fit to come off the fire."

Riviere smiled sadly, but consented to deign to eat a morsel in the porch. Thereat Dard dashed wildly into the kitchen.

They dined at one little round table, each after his fashion. When Dard could eat no more, he proceeded to drink; and to talk in proportion. Riviere, lost in his own thoughts, attended to him as men of business do to a babbling brook; until suddenly from the mass of twaddle broke forth a magic word — Beaurepaire; then the languid lover pricked up his ears and found Mr. Dard was abusing that noble family right and left. Young Riviere inquired what ground of offence they had given *him*. "I'll tell you," said Dard; "they impose on Jacintha; and so she imposes on me." Then observing he had at last gained his employer's ear, he became prodigiously loquacious, as such people generally are when once they get upon their own griefs.

"These Beaurepaire aristocrats," said he, with his hard peasant good-sense, "are neither the one thing nor the other; they cannot keep up nobility, they have not the means; they will not come down off their perch, they have not the sense. No, for as small as they are, they must look and talk as big as ever. They can only afford one servant, and I don't believe they pay her; but they must be attended on just as obsequious as when they had a dozen. And this is fatal to all us little people that have the misfortune to be connected with them."

"Why, how are you connected with them?"

"By the tie of affection."

"I thought you hated them."

"Of course I do; but I have the ill-luck to love Jacintha, and she loves these aristocrats, and makes me do little odd jobs for them." And at this Dard's eyes suddenly glared with horror.

"Well, what of that?" asked Riviere.

"What of it, citizen, what? you do not know the fatal meaning of those accursed words?"

"Why, I never heard of a man's back being broken by little odd jobs."

"Perhaps not his back, citizen, but his heart? if little odd jobs will not break that, why nothing will. Torn from place to place, and from trouble to trouble; as soon as one tiresome thing begins to go a bit smooth, off to a fresh plague, in-doors work when it is dry, out-a-doors when it snows; and then all bustle; no taking one's work quietly, the only way it agrees with a fellow. 'Milk the cow, Dard, but look sharp; the baroness's chair wants mending. Take these slops to the pig, but you must not wait to see him enjoy them: you are wanted to chop billets.' Beat the mats, take down the curtains, walk to church (best part of a league), and

heat the pew cushions ; come back and cut the cabbages, paint the door, and wheel the old lady about the terrace, rub quicksilver on the little dog's back, — mind he don't bite you to make hisself sick, — repair the ottoman, roll the gravel, scour the kettles, carry half a ton of water up twopurostairs, trim the turf, prune the vine, drag the fish-pond; and when you *are* there, go in and gather water lilies for Mademoiselle Josephine while you are drowning the puppies; that is little odd jobs: may Satan twist her neck who invented them!"

"Very sad all this," said young Riviere.

Dard took the little sneer for sympathy, and proceeded to "the cruellest wrong of all."

"When I go into their kitchen to court Jacintha a bit, instead of finding a good supper there, which a man has a right to, courting a cook, if I don't take one in my pocket, there is no supper, not to say supper, for either her or me. *I* don't call a salad and a bit of cheese-rind — *supper*. Beggars in silk and satin! Every sou they have goes on to their backs, instead of into their bellies."

"I have heard their income is much reduced," said Edouard gently.

"Income! I would not change with them if they'd throw me in half a pancake a day. I tell you they are the poorest family for leagues round; not that they need be quite so starved, if they could swallow a little of their pride. But no, they must have china and plate and fine linen at dinner; so their fine plates are always bare, and their silver trays empty. Ask the butcher, if you don't believe *me*. Just you ask him whether he does not go three times to the smallest shopkeeper, for once he goes to Beaurepaire. Their tenants send them a little meal and eggs, and now and then a hen ; and their great garden is chock full of fruit and vegetables, and Jacintha makes me dig in it gratis ; and so they muddle on. But, bless

your heart, coffee! they can't afford it; so they roast a lot of horse-beans that cost nothing, and grind them, and serve up the liquor in a silver coffee-pot, on a silver salver. Haw, haw, haw!"

"Is it possible? reduced to this?" said Edouard gravely.

"Don't you be so weak as to pity them," cried the remorseless plebeian. "Why don't they melt their silver into soup, and cut down their plate into rashers of bacon? why not sell the superfluous, and buy the needful, which it is grub? And, above all, why don't they let their old tumble-down palace to some rich grocer, and that accursed garden along with it, where I sweat gratis, and live small and comfortable, and pay honest men for their little odd jobs, and" — Here Riviere interrupted him, and asked if it was really true about the beans.

"True?" said Dard, "why, I have seen Rose doing it for the old woman's breakfast: it was Rose invented the move. A girl of nineteen beginning already to deceive the world! But they are all tarred with the same stick. Down with the aristocrats!"

"Dard," said Riviere, "you are a brute."

"Me, citizen?" inquired Dard with every appearance of genuine surprise.

Edouard Riviere rose from his seat in great excitement. Dard's abuse of the family he was lately so bitter against had turned him right round. He pitied the very baroness herself, and forgave her declining his visit.

"Be silent," said he, "for shame! There is such a thing as noble poverty; and you have described it. I might have disdained these people in their prosperity, but I revere them in their affliction. And I'll tell you what, don't you ever dare to speak slightly of them again in my presence, or" —

He did not conclude his threat, for just then he observed that a strapping girl, with a basket at her feet, was standing against the corner of the Auberge, in a mighty careless attitude, but doing nothing, so most likely listening with all her ears and soul. Dard, however, did not see her, his back being turned to her as he sat; so he replied at his ease, —

"I consent," said he very coolly: "that is your affair; but permit me," and here he clenched his teeth at remembrance of his wrongs, "to say that *I* will no more be a scullery man without wages to these high-minded starvelings, these illustrious beggars." Then he heated himself red-hot. "I will not even be their galley slave. Next, I have done my last little odd job in this world," yelled the now infuriated *factotum*, bouncing up to his feet in brief fury. "Of two things one: either Jacintha quits those aristos, or I leave Jacin— eh? — ah! — oh! — ahem! How — 'ow d'ye do, Jacintha?" And his roar ended in a whine, as when a dog runs barking out, and receives in full career a cut from his master's whip, his generous rage turns to whimper with ludicrous abruptness. "I was just talking of you, Jacintha," quavered Dard in conclusion.

"I heard you, Dard," replied Jacintha slowly, softly, grimly.

Dard withered.

It was a lusty young woman, with a comely peasant face somewhat freckled, and a pair of large black eyes surmounted by coal-black brows. She stood in a bold attitude, her massive but well-formed arms folded so that the pressure of each against the other made them seem gigantic, and her cheek red with anger, and her eyes glistening like basilisks upon citizen Dard. She looked so grand, with her lowering black brows, that even Riviere felt a little uneasy. As for Jacintha, she was

evidently brooding with more ire than she chose to utter before a stranger. She just slowly unclasped her arms, and, keeping her eye fixed on Dard, pointed with a domineering gesture towards Beaurepaire. Then the doughty Dard seemed no longer master of his limbs: he rose slowly, with his eyes fastened to hers, and was moving off like an ill-oiled automaton in the direction indicated; but at that a suppressed snigger began to shake Riviere's whole body till it bobbed up and down on the seat. Dard turned to him for sympathy.

"There, citizen," he cried, "do you see that imperious gesture? That means you promised to dig in the aristocrat's garden this afternoon, so march! Here, then, is one that has gained nothing by kings being put down, for I am ruled with a mopstick of iron. Thank your stars, citizen, that you are not in my place."

"Dard," retorted Jacintha, "if you don't like your place, I'd quit it. There are two or three young men down in the village will be glad to take it."

"I won't give them the chance, the vile egotists!" cried Dard. And he returned to the château and little odd jobs.

Jacintha hung behind, lowered her eyes, put on a very deferential manner, and thanked Edouard for the kind sentiments he had uttered; but at the same time she took the liberty to warn him against believing the extravagant stories Dard had been telling about her mistress's poverty. She said the simple fact was that the baron had contracted debts, and the baroness, being the soul of honor, was living in great economy to pay them off. Then, as to Dard getting no supper up at Beaurepaire, a complaint that appeared to sting her particularly, she assured him she was alone to blame: the baroness would be very angry if she knew it. "But," said she, "Dard is an egotist. Perhaps you may have noticed that trait in him."

"Glimpses of it," replied Riviere, laughing.

"Monsieur, he is so egotistic that he has not a friend in the world but me. I forgive him, because I know the reason; he has never had a headache or a heartache in his life."

Edouard, aged twenty, and a male, did not comprehend this piece of feminine logic one bit: and, while he puzzled over it in silence, Jacintha went on to say that if she were to fill her egotist's paunch, she should never know whether he came to Beaurepaire for her, or himself. "Now, Dard," she added, "is no beauty, monsieur; why, he is three inches shorter than I am."

"You are joking! he looks a foot," said Edouard.

"He is no scholar neither, and I have had to wipe up many a sneer and many a sarcasm on his account; but up to now I have always been able to reply that this five feet one of egotism loves me sincerely; and the moment I doubt this, I give him the sack, — poor little fellow!"

"In a word," said Riviere, a little impatiently, "the family at Beaurepaire are not in such straits as he pretends?"

"Monsieur, do I look like one starved?"

"By Jove, no! by Ceres, I mean."

"Are my young mistresses wan, and thin?"

"Treason! blasphemy! ah, no! By Venus and Hebe, no!"

Jacintha smiled at this enthusiastic denial, and also because her sex is apt to smile when words are used they do not understand.

"Dard is a fool," suggested Riviere, by way of general solution. He added, "And yet, do you know I wish every word he said had been true." (Jacintha's eyes expressed some astonishment.) "Because then you and I would have concerted means to do them kindnesses,

secretly; for I see you are no ordinary servant; you love your young mistresses. Do you not?"

These simple words seemed to touch a grander chord in Jacintha's nature.

"Love them?" said she, clasping her hands; "ah, sir, do not be offended; but, believe me, it is no small thing to serve an old, old family. My grandfather lived and died with them; my father was their gamekeeper, and fed to his last from off the poor baron's plate (and now they have killed him, poor man); my mother died in the house and was buried in the sacred ground near the family chapel. They put an inscription on her tomb praising her fidelity and probity. Do you think these things do not sink into the heart of the poor? — praise on her tomb, and not a word on their own, but just the name, and when each was born and died, you know. Ah! the pride of the mean is dirt; but the pride of the noble is gold."

[1] "For, look you, among parvenues I should be a servant, and nothing more; in this proud family I am a humble friend; of course they are not always gossiping with me like vulgar masters and mistresses; if they did, I should neither respect nor love them; but they all smile on me whenever I come into the room, even the baroness herself. I belong to them, and they belong to me, by ties without number, by the many kind words in many troubles, by the one roof that sheltered us a hundred years, and the grave where our bones lie together till the day of judgment."

Jacintha clasped her hands, and her black eyes shone out warm through the dew. Riviere's glistened too.

[1] The French peasant often thinks half a sentence, and utters the other half aloud, and so breaks air in the middle of a thought. Probably Jacintha's whole thought, if we had the means of knowing it, would have run like this — Besides, I have another reason: I could not be so comfortable myself elsewhere — for, look you" —

"That is well said," he cried; "it is nobly said: yet, after all, these are ties that owe their force to the souls they bind. How often have such bonds round human hearts proved ropes of sand! They grapple *you* like hooks of steel; because you are steel yourself to the backbone. I admire you, Jacintha. Such women as you have a great mission in France just now."

Jacintha shook her head incredulously. "What can we poor women do?"

"Bring forth heroes," cried Publicola with fervor. "Be the mothers of great men, the Catos and the Gracchi of the future!"

Jacintha smiled. She did not know the Gracchi nor their politics; but the name rang well. "Gracchi!" Aristocrats, no doubt. "That would be too much honor," replied she modestly. "At present, I must say adieu!" and she moved off an inch at a time, in an uncertain hesitating manner, not very difficult to read; but Riviere, you must know, had more than once during this interview begged her to sit down, and in vain; she had always thanked him, but said she had not a moment to stay. So he made no effort to detain her now. The consequence was — she came slowly back of her own accord, and sat down in a corner of the porch, where nobody could see her, and then she sighed deeply.

"What is the matter now?" said Edouard, opening his eyes.

She looked at him point-blank for one moment; and her scale turned.

"Monsieur," said she timidly, "you have a good face, and a good heart. All I told you was — give me your honor not to betray us."

"I swear it," said Edouard, a little pompously.

"Then — Dard was not so far from the truth; it was but a guess of his, for I never trusted my own sweet-

heart as I now trust a stranger. But to see what I see every day, and have no one I dare breathe a word to, oh, it is very hard! But on what a thread things turn! If any one had told me an hour ago it was you I should open my heart to! It's not economy: it's not stinginess; they are not paying off their debts. They never can. The baroness and the Demoiselles de Beaurepaire — are paupers."

"Paupers, Jacintha?"

"Ay, paupers! their debts are greater than their means. They live here by sufferance. They have only their old clothes to wear. They have hardly enough to eat. Just now our cow is in full milk, you know; so that is a great help: but, when she goes dry, Heaven knows what we shall do; for I don't. But that is not the worst; better a light meal than a broken heart. Your precious government offers the château for sale. They might as well send for the guillotine at once, and cut off all our heads. You don't know my mistress as I do. Ah, butchers, you will drag nothing out of that but her corpse. And is it come to this? the great old family to be turned adrift like beggars. My poor mistress! my pretty demoiselles that I played with and nursed ever since I was a child! (I was just six when Josephine was born) and that I shall love with my last breath" —

She could say no more, but choked by the strong feeling so long pent up in her own bosom, fell to sobbing hysterically, and trembling like one in an ague.

The statesman, who had passed all his short life at school and college, was frightened, and took hold of her and pulled her, and cried, "Oh! don't, Jacintha; you will kill yourself, you will die; this is frightful: help here! help!" Jacintha put her hand to his mouth, and, without leaving off her hysterics, gasped out, "Ah! don't expose me." So then he didn't know what to do; but

he seized a tumbler and filled it with wine, and forced it between her lips. All she did was to bite a piece out of the glass as clean as if a diamond had cut it. This did her a world of good: destruction of sacred household property gave her another turn. "There, I've broke your glass now," she cried, with a marvellous change of tone; and she came-to and cried quietly like a reasonable person, with her apron to her eyes.

When Edouard saw she was better, he took her hand and said proudly, "Secret for secret. I choose this moment to confide to you that I love Mademoiselle Rose de Beaurepaire. Love her? I did love her; but now you tell me she is poor and in distress, I adore her." The effect of this declaration on Jacintha was magical, comical. Her apron came down from one eye, and that eye dried itself and sparkled with curiosity: the whole countenance speedily followed suit and beamed with sacred joy. What! an interesting love affair confided to her all in a moment! She lowered her voice to a whisper directly. "Why, how did you manage? She never goes into company."

"No; but she goes to church. Besides, I have met her eleven times out walking with her sister, and twice out of the eleven she smiled on me. O Jacintha! a smile such as angels smile; a smile to warm the heart and purify the soul and last forever in the mind."

"Well, they say 'man is fire and woman tow:' but this beats all. Ha! ha!"

"Oh! do not jest. I did not laugh at you. Jacintha, it is no laughing matter; I revere her as mortals revere the saints; I love her so that were I ever to lose all hope of her I would not live a day. And now that you have told me she is poor and in sorrow, and I think of her walking so calm and gentle — always in black, Jacintha, — and her low courtesy to me whenever we met, and her

sweet smile to me though her heart must be sad, oh! my heart yearns for her. What can I do for her? How shall I surround her with myself unseen — make her feel that a man's love waits upon her feet every step she takes — that a man's love floats in the air round that lovely head?" Then descending to earth for a moment, "but I say, you promise not to betray me; come, secret for secret."

"I will not tell a soul; on the honor of a woman," said Jacintha.

The form of protestation was quite new to Edouard, and not exactly the one his study of the ancient writers would have led him to select. But the tone was convincing: he trusted her. They parted sworn allies; and, at the very moment of parting, Jacintha, who had cast many a furtive glance at the dead game, told Edouard demurely, Mademoiselle Rose was very fond of roast partridge. On this he made her take the whole bag; and went home on wings. Jacintha's revelation roused all that was noble and forgiving in him. His understanding and his heart expanded from that hour, and his fancy spread its pinions to the sun of love. Ah! generous Youth, let who will betray thee; let who will sneer at thee; let me, though young no longer, smile on thee and joy in thee! She he loved was sad, was poor, was menaced by many ills; then she needed a champion. He would be her unseen friend, her guardian angel. A hundred wild schemes whirled in his beating heart and brain. He could not go in-doors, indeed, no room could contain him: he made for a green lane he knew at the back of the village, and there he walked up and down for hours. The sun set, and the night came, and the stars glittered; but still he walked alone, inspired, exalted, full of generous and loving schemes: of sweet and tender fancies: a heart on fire; and youth the fuel, and the flame vestal.

CHAPTER III.

This very day was the anniversary of the baron's death.

The baroness kept her room all the morning, and took no nourishment but one cup of spurious coffee Rose brought her. Towards evening she came down-stairs. In the hall she found two chaplets of flowers; they were always placed there for her on this sad day. She took them in her hand, and went into the little oratory that was in the park; there she found two wax candles burning, and two fresh chaplets hung up. Her daughters had been there before her.

She knelt and prayed many hours for her husband's soul; then she rose and hung up one chaplet and came slowly away with the other in her hand. At the gate of the park, Josephine met her with tender anxiety in her sapphire eyes, and wreathed her arms round her, and whispered, "But you have your children still."

The baroness kissed her and they came towards the house together, the baroness leaning gently on her daughter's elbow.

Between the park and the angle of the château was a small plot of turf called at Beaurepaire the Pleasance, a name that had descended along with other traditions; and in the centre of this Pleasance, or Pleasaunce, stood a wonderful oak-tree. Its circumference was thirty-four feet. The baroness came to this ancient tree, and hung her chaplet on a mutilated limb called the "knights' bough."

The sun was setting tranquil and red; a broad ruby

streak lingered on the deep green leaves of the prodigious oak. The baroness looked at it awhile in silence.

Then she spoke slowly to it and said, "You were here before us: you will be here when we are gone."

A spasm crossed Josephine's face, but she said nothing at the time. And so they went in together.

Now as this tree was a feat of nature, and, above all, played a curious part in our story, I will ask you to stay a few minutes and look at it, while I say what was known about it; not the thousandth part of what it could have told, if trees could speak as well as breathe.

The baroness did not exaggerate; the tree was far older than even this ancient family. They possessed among other archives a manuscript written by a monk, a son of the house, about four hundred years before our story, and containing many of the oral traditions about this tree that had come down to him from remote antiquity. According to this authority, the first Baron of Beaurepaire had pitched his tent under a fair oak-tree that stood *prope rivum*, near a brook. His grandson built a square tower hard by, and dug a moat that enclosed both tree and tower, and received the waters of the brook aforesaid.

At this time the tree seems only to have been remarked for its height. But, a century and a half before the monk wrote, it had become famous in all the district for its girth, and in the monk's own day had ceased to grow; but not begun to decay. The mutilated arm I have mentioned was once a long sturdy bough, worn smooth as velvet in one part from a curious cause: it ran about as high above the ground as a full-sized horse, and the knights and squires used to be forever vaulting upon it, the former in armor; the monk, when a boy, had seen them do it a thousand times. This bough broke in two, A.D. 1617: but the mutilated limb was still called the

knights' bough, nobody knew why. So do names survive their ideas.

What had not this tree seen since first it came green and tender as a cabbage above the soil, and stood at the mercy of the first hare or rabbit that should choose to cut short its frail existence!

Since then eagles had perched on its crown, and wild boars fed without fear of man upon its acorns. Troubadours had sung beneath it to lords and ladies seated round, or walking on the grass and commenting the minstrel's tales of love by exchange of amorous glances. Mediæval sculptors had taken its leaves, and wisely trusting to nature, had adorned churches with those leaves cut in stone.

It had seen a Norman duke conquer England, and English kings invade France and be crowned at Paris. It had seen a girl put knights to the rout, and seen the warrior virgin burned by envious priests with common consent both of the curs she had defended and the curs she had defeated.

Why, in its old age it had seen the rise of printing, and the first dawn of national civilization in Europe. It flourished and decayed in France; but it sprung in Gaul. And more remarkable still, though by all accounts it may see the world to an end, it was a tree in ancient history: its old age awaits the millennium; its first youth belonged to that great tract of time which includes the birth of Christ, the building of Rome, and the siege of Troy.

The tree had, ere this, mingled in the fortunes of the family. It had saved their lives and taken their lives. One lord of Beaurepaire, hotly pursued by his feudal enemies, made for the tree, and hid himself partly by a great bough, partly by the thick screen of leaves. The foe darted in, made sure he had taken to the house, ransacked it, and got into the cellar, where by good-luck was

a store of Malvoisie: and so the oak and the vine saved the quaking baron. Another lord of Beaurepaire, besieged in his castle, was shot dead on the ramparts by a cross-bowman who had secreted himself unobserved in this tree a little before the dawn.

A young heir of Beaurepaire, climbing for a raven's nest to the top of this tree, lost his footing and fell, and died at its foot: and his mother in her anguish bade them cut down the tree that had killed her boy. But the baron her husband refused, and spake in this wise: "ytte ys eneugh that I lose mine sonne, I will nat alsoe lose mine Tre." In the male you see the sober sentiment of the proprietor outweighed the temporary irritation of the parent. Then the mother bought fifteen ells of black velvet, and stretched a pall from the knights' bough across the west side to another branch, and cursed the hand that should remove it, and she herself "wolde never passe the Tre neither going nor coming, but went still about." And when she died and should have been carried past the tree to the park, her dochter did cry from a window to the bearers, "Goe about! goe about!" and they went about, and all the company. And in time the velvet pall rotted, and was torn and driven away by the winds: and when the hand of Nature, and no human hand, had thus flouted and dispersed the trappings of the mother's grief, two pieces were picked up and preserved among the family relics: but the black velvet had turned a rusty red.

So the baroness did nothing new in this family when she hung her chaplet on the knights' bough; and, in fact, on the west side, about eighteen feet from the ground, there still mouldered one corner of an Atchievement an heir of Beaurepaire had nailed there two centuries before, when his predecessor died: "For," said he, "the château is of yesterday, but the tree has seen us all come and go."

The inside of the oak was hollow as a drum; and on its east side yawned a fissure as high as a man and as broad as a street-door. Dard used to wheel his wheelbarrow into the tree at a trot, and there leave it.

Yet in spite of excavation and mutilation not life only but vigor dwelt in this wooden shell. The extreme ends of the longer boughs were firewood, touchwood, and the crown was gone this many a year: but narrow the circle a very little to where the indomitable trunk could still shoot sap from its cruse deep in earth, and there on every side burst the green foliage in its season countless as the sand. The leaves carved centuries ago from these very models, though cut in stone, were most of them mouldered, blunted, notched, deformed: but the delicate types came back with every summer, perfect and lovely as when the tree was but their elder brother: and greener than ever: for, from what cause nature only knows, the leaves were many shades richer than any other tree could show for a hundred miles round; a deep green, fiery, yet soft; and then their multitude — the staircases of foliage as you looked up the tree, and could scarce catch a glimpse of the sky. An inverted abyss of color, a mound, a dome, of flake emeralds that quivered in the golden air.

And now the sun sets; the green leaves are black; the moon rises: her cold light shoots across one half that giant stem.

How solemn and calm stands the great round tower of living wood, half ebony, half silver, with its mighty cloud above of flake jet leaves tipped with frosty fire!

Now is the still hour to repeat in a whisper the words of the dame of Beaurepaire, "You were here before us: you will be here when we are gone."

We leave the hoary king of trees standing in the

moonlight, calmly defying time, and follow the creatures of a day; for, what they were, we are.

A spacious saloon panelled; dead but snowy white picked out sparingly with gold. Festoons of fruits and flowers finely carved in wood on some of the panels. These also not smothered in gilding, but as it were gold speckled here and there, like tongues of flame winding among insoluble snow. Ranged against the walls were sofas and chairs covered with rich stuffs well worn. And in one little distant corner of the long room a gray-haired gentleman and two young ladies sat round a small plain table, on which burned a solitary candle; and a little way apart in this candle's twilight an old lady sat in an easy-chair, thinking of the past, scarce daring to inquire the future. Josephine and Rose were working: not fancy-work but needle-work; Dr. Aubertin writing. Every now and then he put the one candle nearer the girls. They raised no objection: only a few minutes after a white hand would glide from one or other of them like a serpent, and smoothly convey the light nearer to the doctor's manuscript.

"Is it not supper-time?" he inquired. "I have an inward monitor; and I think our dinner was more ethereal than usual."

"Hush!" said Josephine, and looked uneasily towards her mother. "Wax is so dear."

"Wax?—ah!—pardon me:" and the doctor returned hastily to his work. But Rose looked up and said, "I wonder Jacintha does not come; it is certainly past the hour;" and she pried into the room as if she expected to see Jacintha on the road. But she saw in fact very little of anything, for the spacious room was impenetrable to her eye; midway from the candle to the distant door its twilight deepened, and all became shapeless and

sombre. The prospect ended sharp and black, as in those out-o'-door closets imagined and painted by a certain great painter, whose Nature comes to a full stop as soon as he has no further commercial need of her, instead of melting by fine expanse and exquisite gradation into genuine distance, as nature does in Claude and in nature. To reverse the picture, if you stood at the door you looked across forty feet of black, and the little corner seemed on fire, and the fair heads about the candle shone like the St. Cecilias and Madonnas in an antique stained-glass window.

At last the door opened, and another candle fired Jacintha's comely peasant face in the doorway. She put down her candle outside the door, and started as crow flies for the other light. After glowing a moment in the doorway she dived into the shadow and emerged into light again close to the table with napkins on her arm. She removed the work-box reverentially, the doctor's manuscript unceremoniously, and proceeded to lay a cloth: in which operation she looked at Rose a point-blank glance of admiration: then she placed the napkins; and in this process she again cast a strange look of interest upon Rose. The young lady noticed it this time, and looked inquiringly at her in return, half expecting some communication; but Jacintha lowered her eyes and bustled about the table. Then Rose spoke to her with a sort of instinct of curiosity, on the chance of drawing her out.

"Supper is late to-night, is it not, Jacintha?"

"Yes, mademoiselle; I have had more cooking than usual," and with this she delivered another point-blank look as before, and dived into the palpable obscure, and came to light in the doorway.

Her return was anxiously expected; for, if the truth must be told, they were very hungry. So rigorous was

the economy in this decayed but honorable house that the wax candles burned to-day in the oratory had scrimped their dinner, unsubstantial as it was wont to be. Think of that, you in fustian jackets who grumble after meat. The door opened, Jacintha reappeared in the light of her candle a moment with a tray in both hands, and, approaching, was lost to view; but a strange and fragrant smell heralded her. All their eyes turned with curiosity towards the unwonted odor, and Jacintha dawned with three roast partridges on a dish.

They were wonder-struck, and looked from the birds to her in mute surprise, that was not diminished by a certain cynical indifference she put on. She avoided their eyes, and forcibly excluded from her face everything that could imply she did not serve up partridges to this family every night of her life.

"The supper is served, madame," said she, with a respectful courtesy and a mechanical tone, and, plunging into the night, swam out at her own candle, shut the door, and, unlocking her face that moment, burst out radiant, and so to the kitchen, and, with a tear in her eye, set-to and polished all the copper stewpans with a vigor and expedition unknown to the new-fangled domestic.

"Partridges, mamma! What next?"

"Pheasants, I hope," cried the doctor, gayly. "And after them hares; to conclude with royal venison. Permit me, ladies." And he set himself to carve with zeal.

Now nature is nature, and two pair of violet eyes brightened and dwelt on the fragrant and delicate food with demure desire; for all that, when Aubertin offered Josephine a wing, she declined it. "No partridge?" cried the *savant*, in utter amazement.

"Not to-day, dear friend; it is not a feast day to-day."

"Ah! no; what was I thinking of?"

"But you are not to be deprived," put in Josephine, anxiously. "We will not deny ourselves the pleasure of seeing you eat some."

"What!" remonstrated Aubertin, "am I not one of you?"

The baroness had attended to every word of this. She rose from her chair, and said quietly, "Both you and he and Rose will be so good as to let me see you eat."

"But, mamma," remonstrated Josephine and Rose in one breath.

"*Je le veux*," was the cold reply.

These were words the baroness uttered so seldom that they were little likely to be disputed.

The doctor carved and helped the young ladies and himself.

When they had all eaten a little, a discussion was observed to be going on between Rose and her sister. At last Aubertin caught these words, "It will be in vain; even you have not influence enough for that, Rose."

"We shall see," was the reply, and Rose put the wing of a partridge on a plate and rose calmly from her chair. She took the plate and put it on a little work-table by her mother's side. The others pretended to be all mouths, but they were all ears. The baroness looked in Rose's face with an air of wonder that was not very encouraging. Then, as Rose said nothing, she raised her aristocratic hand with a courteous but decided gesture of refusal.

Undaunted Rose laid her palm softly on the baroness's shoulder, and said to her as firmly as the baroness herself had just spoken, —

"*Il le veut.*"

The baroness was staggered. Then she looked with moist eyes at the fair young face, then she reflected. At last she said, with an exquisite mixture of politeness and affection, "It is his daughter who has told me '*Il le veut.*' I obey."

Rose returning like a victorious knight from the lists, saucily exultant, and with only one wet eyelash, was solemnly kissed and petted by Josephine and the doctor.

Thus they loved one another in this great, old, falling house. Their familiarity had no coarse side; a form, not of custom but affection, it went hand-in-hand with courtesy by day and night.

The love of the daughters for their mother had all the tenderness, subtlety, and unselfishness of womanly natures, together with a certain characteristic of the female character. And whither that one defect led them, and by what gradations, it may be worth the reader's while to observe.

The baroness retired to rest early; and she was no sooner gone than Josephine leaned over to Rose, and told her what their mother had said to the oak-tree. Rose heard this with anxiety; hitherto they had carefully concealed from their mother that the government claimed the right of selling the château to pay the creditors, etc.; and now both sisters feared the old lady had discovered it somehow, or why that strange thing she had said to the oak-tree? But Dr. Aubertin caught their remarks, and laid down his immortal MS. on French insects, to express his hope that they were putting a forced interpretation on the baroness's words.

"I think," said he, "she merely meant how short-lived are we all compared with this ancient oak. I should be very sorry to adopt the other interpretation; for if she knows she can at any moment be expelled from Beaurepaire, it will be almost as bad for her as the calamity itself; *that*, I think, would kill her."

"Why so?" said Rose, eagerly. "What is this house or that? Mamma will still have her daughters' love, go where she will."

Aubertin replied, "It is idle to deceive ourselves; at

her age men and women hang to life by their habits; take her away from her château, from the little oratory where she prays every day for the departed, from her place in the sun on the south terrace, and from all the memories that surround her here; she would soon pine, and die."

Here the *savant* seeing a hobby-horse near, caught him and jumped on. He launched into a treatise upon the vitality of human beings, and proved that it is the mind which keeps the body of a man alive for so great a length of time as fourscore years; for that he had in the earlier part of his studies carefully dissected a multitude of animals, — frogs, rabbits, dogs, men, horses, sheep, squirrels, foxes, cats, etc., — and discovered no peculiarity in man's organs to account for his singular longevity, except in the brain or organ of mind. Thence he went to the longevity of men with contented minds, and the rapid decay of the careworn. Finally he succeeded in convincing them the baroness was so constituted, physically and mentally, that she would never move from Beaurepaire except into her grave. However, having thus terrified them, he proceeded to console them. "You have a friend," said he, "a powerful friend; and here in my pocket — somewhere — is a letter that proves it."

The letter was from Mr. Perrin the notary. It appeared by it that Dr. Aubertin had reminded the said Perrin of his obligations to the late baron, and entreated him to use all his influence to keep the estate in this ancient family.

Perrin had replied at first in a few civil lines; but his present letter was a long and friendly one. It made both the daughters of Beaurepaire shudder at the peril they had so narrowly escaped. For by it they now learned for the first time that one Jaques Bonard, a small farmer, to whom they owed but five thousand francs, had gone

to the mayor and insisted, as he had a perfect right, on the estate being put up to public auction. This had come to Perrin's ears just in time, and he had instantly bought Bonard's debt, and stopped the auction; not, however, before the very bills were printed; for which he, Perrin, had paid, and now forwarded the receipt. He concluded by saying that the government agent was personally inert, and would never move a step in the matter unless driven by a creditor.

"But we have so many," said Rose in dismay. "We are not safe a day."

Aubertin assured her the danger was only in appearance. "Your large creditors are men of property, and such men let their funds lie unless compelled to move them. The small mortgagee, the petty miser, who has, perhaps, no investment to watch but one small loan, about which he is as anxious and as noisy as a hen with one chicken, he is the clamorous creditor, the harsh little egoist, who for fear of risking a crown piece would bring the Garden of Eden to the hammer. Now we are rid of that little wretch, Bonard, and have Perrin on our side; so there is literally nothing to fear."

The sisters thanked him warmly, and Rose shared his hopes; and said so; but Josephine was silent and thoughtful. Nothing more worth recording passed that night. But the next day was the first of May, Josephine's birthday.

Now they always celebrated this day as well as they could; and used to plant a tree, for one thing. Dard, well spurred by Jacintha, had got a little acacia; and they were all out in the Pleasaunce to plant it. Unhappily, they were a preposterous time making up their feminine minds where to have it set; so Dard turned rusty and said the park was the best place for it. There it could do no harm, stick it where you would.

"And who told you to put in your word?" inquired Jacintha. "You're here to dig the hole where mademoiselle chooses; not to argufy."

Josephine whispered Rose, "I admire the energy of her character. Could she be induced to order once for all where the poor thing is to be planted?"

"Then where *will* you have it, mademoiselle?" asked Dard, sulkily.

"Here, I think, Dard," said Josephine sweetly.

Dard grinned malignantly, and drove in his spade. "It will never be much bigger than a stinging nettle," thought he, "for the roots of the oak have sucked every atom of heart out of this." His black soul exulted secretly.

Jacintha stood by Dard, inspecting his work; the sisters intertwined, a few feet from him. The baroness turned aside, and went to look for a moment at the chaplet she had placed yesterday on the oak-tree bough. Presently she uttered a slight ejaculation; and her daughters looked up directly.

"Come here, children," said she. They glided to her in a moment; and found her eyes fixed upon an object that lay on the knights' bough.

It was a sparkling purse.

I dare say you have noticed that the bark on the boughs of these very ancient trees is as deeply furrowed as the very stem of an oak tree that boasts but a few centuries; and in one of these deep furrows lay a green silk purse with gold coins glittering through the glossy meshes.

Josephine and Rose eyed it a moment like startled deer; then Rose pounced on it. "Oh, how heavy!" she cried. This brought up Dard and Jacintha, in time to see Rose pour ten shining gold pieces out of the purse into her pink-white palm, while her face flushed and her

eyes glittered with excitement. Jacintha gave a scream of joy; "Our luck is turned," she cried, superstitiously. Meanwhile, Josephine had found a slip of paper close to the purse. She opened it with nimble fingers; it contained one line in a hand like that of a copying clerk: FROM A FRIEND: IN PART PAYMENT OF A GREAT DEBT.

Keen, piquant curiosity now took the place of surprise. Who could it be? The baroness's suspicion fell at once on Dr. Aubertin. But Rose maintained he had not ten gold pieces in the world. The baroness appealed to Josephine. She only blushed in an extraordinary way, and said nothing. They puzzled, and puzzled, and were as much in the dark as ever, when lo! one of the suspected parties delivered himself into the hands of justice with ludicrous simplicity. It happened to be Dr. Aubertin's hour of out-a-door study; and he came mooning along, buried in a book, and walked slowly into the group — started, made a slight apology, and was mooning off, lost in his book again. Then the baroness, who had eyed him with grim suspicion all the time, said with well-affected *nonchalance*, "Doctor, you dropped your purse; we have just picked it up." And she handed it to him. "Thank you, madame," said he, and took it quietly without looking at it, put it in his pocket, and retired, with his soul in his book. They stared comically at one another, and at this cool hand. "It's no more his than it's mine," said Jacintha, bluntly. Rose darted after the absorbed student, and took him captive. "Now, doctor," she cried, "be pleased to come out of the clouds." And with the word she whipped the purse out of his coat pocket, and holding it right up before his eye, insisted on his telling her whether that was his purse or not, money and all. Thus adjured, he disowned the property mighty coolly, for a retired physician, who had just pocketed it.

"No, my dear," said he; "and, now I think of it, I have not carried a purse this twenty years."

The baroness, as a last resource, appealed to his honor whether he had not left a purse and paper on the knights' bough. The question had to be explained by Josephine, and then the doctor surprised them all by being rather affronted — for once in his life.

"Baroness," said he, "I have been your friend and pensioner nearly twenty years; if by some strange chance money were to come into my hands, I should not play you a childish trick like this. What! have I not the right to come to you, and say, 'My old friend, here I bring you back a very small part of all I owe you?'"

"What geese we are," remarked Rose. "Dear doctor, *you* tell us who it is."

Dr. Aubertin reflected a single moment; then said he could make a shrewd guess.

"Who? who? who?" cried the whole party.

"Perrin the notary."

It was the baroness's turn to be surprised; for there was nothing romantic about Perrin the notary. Aubertin, however, let her know that he was in private communication with the said Perrin, and this was not the first friendly act the good notary had done her in secret.

While he was converting the baroness to his view, Josephine and Rose exchanged a signal, and slipped away round an angle of the château.

"Who is it?" said Rose.

"It is some one who has a delicate mind."

"Clearly, and therefore not a notary."

"Rose, dear, might it not be some person who has done us some wrong, and is perhaps penitent?"

"Certainly; one of our tenants, or creditors, you mean; but then, the paper says 'a friend.' Stay, it says a debtor. Why a debtor? Down with enigmas!"

"Roes, love," said Josephine, coaxingly, "think of some one that might — since it is not the doctor, nor Monsieur Perrin, might it not be — for after all, he would naturally be ashamed to appear before me."

"Before you? Who do you mean?" asked Rose nervously, catching a glimpse now.

"He who once pretended to love me."

"Josephine, you love that man still."

"No, no. Spare me!"

"You love him just the same as ever. Oh, it is wonderful; it is terrible; the power he has over you; over your judgment as well as your heart."

"No! for I believe he has forgotten my very name; don't you think so?"

"Dear Josephine, can you doubt it? Come, you do doubt it."

"Sometimes."

"But why? for what reason?"

"Because of what he said to me as we parted at that gate; the words and the voice seem still to ring like truth across the weary years. He said, 'I am to join the army of the Pyrenees, so fatal to our troops; but say to me what you never yet have said, Camille, I love you: and I swear I will come back alive.' So then I said to him, 'I love you,' — and he never came back."

"How could he come here? a deserter, a traitor!"

"It is not true; it is not in his nature; inconstancy may be. Tell me that he never really loved me, and I will believe you; but not that he is a traitor. Let me weep over my past love, not blush for it."

"Past? You love him to-day as you did three years ago."

"No," said Josephine, "no; I love no one. I never shall love any one again."

"But him. It is that love which turns your heart

against others. Oh, yes, you love him, dearest, or why should you fancy our secret benefactor *could* be that Camille?"

"Why? Because I was mad: because it is impossible; but I see my folly. I am going in."

"What! don't you care to know who *I* think it was, perhaps?"

"No," said Josephine sadly and doggedly; she added with cold *nonchalance*, "I dare say time will show." And she went slowly in, her hand to her head.

"Her birthday!" sighed Rose.

The donor, whoever he was, little knew the pain he was inflicting on this distressed but proud family, or the hard battle that ensued between their necessities and their delicacy. The ten gold pieces were a perpetual temptation: a daily conflict. The words that accompanied the donation offered a bait. Their pride and dignity declined it; but these bright bits of gold cost them many a sharp pang. You must know that Josephine and Rose had worn out their mourning by this time; and were obliged to have recourse to gayer materials that lay in their great wardrobes, and were older, but less worn. A few of these gold pieces would have enabled the poor girls to be neat, and yet to mourn their father openly. And it went through and through those tender, simple hearts, to think that they must be disunited, even in so small a thing as dress; that while their mother remained in her weeds, they must seem no longer to share her woe.

The baroness knew their feeling, and felt its piety, and yet could not bow her dignity to say, "Take five of these bits of gold, and let us all look what we are — one." Yet in this, as in everything else, they supported each other. They resisted, they struggled, and with a wrench they conquered day by day. At last, by general

consent, Josephine locked up the tempter, and they looked at it no more. But the little bit of paper met a kinder fate. Rose made a little frame for it, and it was kept in a drawer, in the *salon:* and often looked at and blessed. Just when they despaired of human friendship, this paper with the sacred word "friend" written on it, had fallen all in a moment on their aching hearts.

They could not tell whence it came, this blessed word.

But men dispute whence comes the dew?

Then let us go with the poets, who say it comes from heaven.

And even so that sweet word, friend, dropped like the dew from heaven on these afflicted ones.

So they locked the potent gold away from themselves, and took the kind slip of paper to their hearts.

The others left off guessing: Aubertin had it all his own way: he upheld Perrin as their silent benefactor, and bade them all observe that the worthy notary had never visited the château openly since the day the purse was left there. "Guilty conscience," said Aubertin dryly.

One day in his walks he met a gaunt figure ambling on a fat pony: he stopped him, and, holding up his finger, said abruptly, "We have found you out, Maître Perrin."

The notary changed color.

"Oh, never be ashamed," said Aubertin; "a good action done slyly is none the less a good action."

The notary wore a puzzled air.

Aubertin admired his histrionic powers in calling up this look.

"Come, come, don't overdo it," said he. "Well, well; they cannot profit by your liberality; but you will be rewarded in a better world, take my word for that."

The notary muttered indistinctly. He was a man of moderate desires; would have been quite content if there

had been no other world in perspective. He had studied this one, and made it pay: did not desire a better; sometimes feared a worse.

"Ah!" said Aubertin, "I see how it is; we do not like to hear ourselves praised, do we? When shall we see you at the château?"

"I propose to call on the baroness the moment I have good news to bring," replied Perrin; and to avoid any more compliments spurred the dun pony suddenly; and he waddled away.

Now this Perrin was at that moment on the way to dine with a character who plays a considerable part in the tale — Commandant Raynal. Perrin had made himself useful to the commandant, and had become his legal adviser. And, this very day after dinner, the commandant having done a good day's work permitted himself a little sentiment over the bottle, and to a man he thought his friend. He let out that he had a heap of money he did not know what to do with, and almost hated it now his mother was gone and could not share it.

The man of law consoled him with oleaginous phrases: told him he very much underrated the power of money. His hoard, directed by a judicious adviser, would make him a landed proprietor, and the husband of some young lady, all beauty, virtue, and accomplishment, whose soothing influence would soon heal the sorrow caused by an excess of filial sentiment.

"Halt!" shouted Raynal: "say that again in half the words."

Perrin was nettled, for he prided himself on his colloquial style.

"You can buy a fine estate and a chaste wife with the money," snapped this smooth personage, substituting curt brutality for honeyed prolixity.

The soldier was struck by the propositions the moment they flew at him small and solid, like bullets.

"I've no time," said he, "to be running after women. But the estate I'll certainly have, because you can get that for me without my troubling my head."

"Is it a commission, then?" asked the other sharply.

"Of course. Do you think I speak for the sake of talking?"

And so Perrin received formal instructions to look out for a landed estate; and he was to receive a handsome commission as agent.

Now to settle this affair, and pocket a handsome percentage for himself, he had only to say "Beaurepaire."

Well, he didn't. Never mentioned the place; nor the fact that it was for sale.

Such are all our agents, when rival speculators. Mind that. Still it is a terrible thing to be so completely in the power of any man of the world, as from this hour Beaurepaire was in the power of Perrin the notary.

CHAPTER IV.

Edouard Riviere was unhappy. She never came out now. This alone made the days dark to him. And then he began to fear it was him she shunned. She must have seen him lie in wait for her; and so she would come out no more. He prowled about and contrived to fall in with Jacintha; he told her his grief. She assured him the simple fact was their mourning was worn out, and they were ashamed to go abroad in colors. This revelation made his heart yearn still more.

"O Jacintha," said he, "if I could only make a beginning; but here we might live a century in the same parish, and not one chance for a poor wretch to make acquaintance."

Jacintha admitted this, and said gentlefolks were to be pitied. "Why, if it was the likes of me, you and I should have made friends long before now."

Jacintha herself was puzzled what to do; she would have told Rose if she had felt sure it would be well received; but she could not find out that the young lady had even noticed the existence of Edouard. But her brain worked, and lay in wait for an opportunity.

One came sooner than she expected. One morning at about six o'clock, as she came home from milking the cow, she caught sight of young Riviere trying to open the iron gate. "What is up now?" thought she; suddenly the truth flashed upon her, clear as day. She put her pail down and stole upon him. "You want to leave us another purse," said she. He colored all over and panted.

"How did you know? how could you know? you won't betray me? you won't be so cruel? you promised."

"Me betray you," said Jacintha; "why, I'll help you; and then they will be able to buy mourning, you know, and then they will come out, and give you a chance. You can't open that gate, for it's locked. But you come round to the lane, and I'll get you the key; it is hanging up in the kitchen."

The key was in her pocket. But the sly jade wanted him away from that gate; it commanded a view of the Pleasaunce. He was no sooner safe in the lane, than she tore up-stairs to her young ladies, and asked them with affected calm whether they would like to know who left the purse.

"Oh, yes, yes!" screamed Rose.

"Then come with me. You *are* dressed; never mind your bonnets, or you will be too late."

Questions poured on her; but she waived all explanation, and did not give them time to think, or Josephine, for one, she knew would raise objections. She led the way to the Pleasaunce, and, when she got to the ancestral oak, she said hurriedly, "Now, mesdemoiselles, hide in there, and as still as mice. You'll soon know who leaves the purses."

With this she scudded to the lane, and gave Edouard the key. "Look sharp," said she, "before they get up; it's almost their dressing time."

"*You'll soon know who leaves the purses!*"

Curiosity, delicious curiosity, thrilled our two daughters of Eve.

This soon began to alternate with chill misgivings at the novelty of the situation.

"She is not coming back," said Josephine ruefully.

"No," said Rose, "and suppose when we pounce out on him, it should be a stranger."

"Pounce on him? surely we are not to do that?"

"Oh, y-yes; that is the p-p-programme," quavered Rose.

A key grated, and the iron gate creaked on its hinges. They ran together and pinched one another for mutual support, but did not dare to speak.

Presently a man's shadow came slap into the tree. They crouched and quivered, and expected to be caught instead of catching, and wished themselves safe back in bed, and all this a nightmare, and no worse.

At last they recovered themselves enough to observe that this shadow, one half of which lay on the ground, while the head and shoulders went a little way up the wall of the tree, represented a man's profile, not his front face. The figure, in short, was standing between them and the sun, and was contemplating the château, not the tree.

The shadow took off its hat to Josephine, in the tree. Then would she have screamed if she had not bitten her white hand instead, and made a red mark thereon.

It wiped its brow with a handkerchief; it had walked fast, poor thing! The next moment it was away.

They looked at one another and panted. They scarcely dared do it before. Then Rose, with one hand on her heaving bosom, shook her little white fist viciously at where the figure must be, and perhaps a comical desire of vengeance stimulated her curiosity. She now glided through the fissure like a cautious panther from her den; and noiseless and supple as a serpent began to wind slowly round the tree. She soon came to a great protuberance in the tree, and twining and peering round it with diamond eye, she saw a very young, very handsome gentleman, stealing on tiptoe to the nearest flower-bed. Then she saw him take a purse out of his bosom, and drop it on the bed. This done, he came slowly past

the tree again, and was even heard to vent a little innocent chuckle of intense satisfaction: but of brief duration; for, when Rose saw the purse leave his hand, she made a rapid signal to Josephine to wheel round the other side of the tree, and, starting together with admirable concert, both the daughters of Beaurepaire glided into sight with a vast appearance of composure.

Two women together are really braver than fifteen separate; but still, most of this tranquillity was merely put on, but so admirably that Edouard Riviere had no chance with them. He knew nothing about their tremors; all he saw or heard was, a rustle, then a flap on each side of him as of great wings, and two lovely women were upon him with angelic swiftness. "Ah!" he cried out with a start, and glanced from the first-comer, Rose, to the gate. But Josephine was on that side by this time, and put up her hand, as much as to say, "You can't pass here." In such situations, the mind works quicker than lightning. He took off his hat, and stammered an excuse — "Come to look at the oak." At this moment Rose pounced on the purse, and held it up to Josephine. He was caught. His only chance now was to bolt for the mark and run; but it was not the notary, it was a novice who lost his presence of mind, or perhaps thought it rude to run when a lady told him to stand still. All he did was to crush his face into his two hands, round which his cheeks and neck now blushed red as blood. Blush? they could both see the color rush like a wave to the very roots of his hair and the tips of his fingers.

The moment our heroines, who, in that desperation which is one of the forms of cowardice, had hurled themselves on the foe, saw this, flash — the quick-witted poltroons exchanged purple lightning over Edouard's drooping head, and enacted lionesses in a moment.

It was with the quiet composure of lofty and powerful natures that Josephine opened on him. "Compose yourself, sir; and be so good as to tell us who you are." Edouard must answer. Now he could not speak through his hands; and he could not face a brace of tranquil lionesses: so he took a middle course, removed one hand, and shading himself from Josephine with the other, he gasped out, "I am — my name is Riviere; and I — I — ladies!"

"I am afraid we frighten you," said Josephine, demurely.

"Don't be frightened," said Rose, majestically; "we are not *very* angry, only a *little* curious to know why you water our flowers with gold."

At this point-blank thrust, and from her, Edouard was so confounded and distressed, they both began to pity him. He stammered out that he was so confused he did not know what to say. He couldn't think how ever he could have taken such a liberty; might he be permitted to retire? and with this he tried to slip away.

"Let me detain you one instant," said Josephine, and made for the house.

Left alone so suddenly with the culprit, the dignity, and majesty, and valor of Rose seemed to ooze gently out; and she stood blushing, and had not a word to say; no more had Edouard. But he hung his head, and she hung her head. And, somehow or other, whenever she raised her eyes to glance at him, he raised his to steal a look at her, and mutual discomfiture resulted.

This awkward, embarrassing delirium was interrupted by Josephine's return. She now held another purse in her hand, and quietly poured the rest of the coin into it. She then, with a blush, requested him to take back the money.

At that he found his tongue. "No, no," he cried, and

put up his hands in supplication. "Ladies, do let me speak *one* word to you. Do not reject my friendship. You are alone in the world; your father is dead; your mother has but you to lean on. After all, I am your neighbor, and neighbors should be friends. And I am your debtor; I owe you more than you could ever owe me; for ever since I came into this neighborhood I have been happy. No man was ever so happy as I, ever since one day I was walking, and met for the first time an angel. I don't say it was you, Mademoiselle Rose. It might be Mademoiselle Josephine."

"How pat he has got our names," said Rose, smiling.

"A look from that angel has made me so good, so happy. I used to vegetate, but now I live. Live! I walk on wings, and tread on roses. Yet you insist on declining a few miserable louis d'or from him who owes you so much. Well, don't be angry; I'll take them back, and throw them into the nearest pond, for they are really no use to me. But then you will be generous in your turn. You will accept my devotion, my services. You have no brother, you know; well, I have no sisters; let me be your brother, and your servant forever."

At all this, delivered in as many little earnest pants as there were sentences, the water stood in the fair eyes he was looking into so piteously.

Josephine was firm, but angelical. "We thank you, Monsieur Riviere," said she, softly, "for showing us that the world is still embellished with hearts like yours. Here is the money;" and she held it out in her creamy hand.

"But we are very grateful," put in Rose, softly and earnestly.

"That we are," said Josephine, "and we beg to keep the purse as a souvenir of one who tried to do us a kindness without mortifying us. And now, Monsieur Riviere, you will permit us to bid you adieu."

Edouard was obliged to take the hint. "It is I who am the intruder," said he. "Mesdemoiselles, conceive, if you can, my pride and my disappointment." He then bowed low; they courtesied low to him in return; and he retired slowly in a state of mixed feeling indescribable.

With all their sweetness and graciousness, he felt overpowered by their high breeding, their reserve, and their composure, in a situation that had set his heart beating itself nearly out of his bosom. He acted the scene over again, only much more adroitly, and concocted speeches for past use, and was very hot and very cold by turns.

I wish he could have heard what passed between the sisters as soon as ever he was out of earshot. It would have opened his eyes, and given him a little peep into what certain writers call "the sex."

"Poor boy," murmured Josephine, "he has gone away unhappy."

"Oh, I dare say he hasn't gone far," replied Rose, gayly. "*I* shouldn't if *I* was a boy."

Josephine held up her finger like an elder sister; then went on to say she really hardly knew why she had dismissed him.

"Well, dear," said Rose, dryly, "since you admit so much, I must say I couldn't help thinking — while you were doing it — we were letting 'the poor boy' off ridiculously cheap."

"At least I did my duty?" suggested Josephine, inquiringly.

"Magnificently; you overawed even me. So now to business, as the gentlemen say. Which of us two takes him?"

"Takes whom?" inquired Josephine, opening her lovely eyes.

"Edouard," murmured Rose, lowering hers.

Josephine glared on the lovely minx with wonder and comical horror.

"Oh! you shall have him," said Rose, "if you like. You are the eldest, you know."

"Fie!"

"Do now; *to oblige me.*"

"For shame! Rose. Is this you? talking like that!"

"Oh! there's no compulsion, dear; I never force young ladies' inclinations. So you decline him?"

"Of course I decline him."

"Then, oh, you dear, darling Josephine, this is the prettiest present you ever made me," and she kissed her vehemently.

Josephine was frightened now. She held Rose out at arm's length with both hands, and looked earnestly into her, and implored her not to play with fire. "Take warning by me."

Rose recommended her to keep her pity for Monsieur Riviere, "who had fallen into nice hands," she said. That no doubt might remain on that head, she whispered mysteriously, but with much gravity and conviction, "I am an Imp;" and aimed at Josephine with her forefinger to point the remark. For one second she stood and watched this important statement sink into her sister's mind, then set-to and gambolled elfishly round her as she moved stately and thoughtful across the grass to the château.

Two days after this a large tree was blown down in Beaurepaire park, and made quite a gap in the prospect. You never know what a big thing a leafy tree is till it comes down. And this ill wind blew Edouard good; for it laid bare the château to his inquiring telescope. He had not gazed above half an hour, when a female figure emerged from the château. His heart beat. It was only Jacintha. He saw her look this way and that, and pres

ently Dard appeared, and she sent him with his axe to the fallen tree. Edouard watched him hacking away at it. Presently his heart gave a violent leap; for why? two ladies emerged from the Pleasaunce and walked across the park. They came up to Dard, and stood looking at the tree and Dard hacking it, and Edouard watched them greedily. You know we all love to magnify her we love. And this was a delightful way of doing it. It is "a system of espionage" that prevails under every form of government. How he gazed, and gazed, on his now polar star; studied every turn, every gesture, with eager delight, and tried to gather what she said, or at least the nature of it.

But by and by they left Dard and strolled towards the other end of the park. Then did our astronomer fling down his tube, and come running out in hopes of intercepting them, and seeming to meet them by some strange fortuity. Hope whispered he should be blessed with a smile; perhaps a word even. So another minute and he was running up the road to Beaurepaire. But his good heart was doomed to be diverted to a much humbler object than his idol; as he came near the fallen tree he heard loud cries for help, followed by groans of pain. He bounded over the hedge, and there was Dard hanging over his axe, moaning. "What is the matter? what is the matter?" cried Edouard, running to him.

"Oh! oh! cut my foot. Oh!"

Edouard looked, and turned sick, for there was a gash right through Dard's shoe, and the blood welling up through it. But, recovering himself by an effort of the will, he cried out, "Courage, my lad! don't give in. Thank Heaven there's no artery there. Oh, dear, it is a terrible cut! Let us get you home, that is the first thing. Can you walk?"

"Lord bless you, no! nor stand neither without help."

Edouard flew to the wheelbarrow, and, reversing it, spun a lot of billet out. "Ye must not do that," said Dard with all the energy he was capable of in his present condition. "Why, that is Jacintha's wood." — "To the devil with Jacintha and her wood too!" cried Edouard, "a man is worth more than a fagot. Come, I shall wheel you home: it is only just across the park."

With some difficulty he lifted him into the barrow. Luckily he had his shooting-jacket on with a brandy-flask in it: he administered it with excellent effect.

The ladies, as they walked, saw a man wheeling a barrow across the park, and took no particular notice; but, as Riviere was making for the same point they were, though at another angle, presently the barrow came near enough for them to see Dard's head and arms in it. Rose was the first to notice this. "Look! look! if he is not wheeling Dard in the barrow now."

"Who?"

"Can you ask? Who provides all our excitement?"

Josephine instantly divined there was something amiss. "Consider," said she, "Monsieur Riviere would not wheel Dard all across the park for amusement."

Rose assented; and in another minute, by a strange caprice of fate, those Edouard had come to intercept, quickened their pace to intercept him. As soon as he saw their intention he thrilled all over, but did not slacken his pace. He told Dard to take his coat and throw it over his foot, for here were the young ladies coming.

"What for?" said Dard sulkily. "No! let them see what they have done with their little odd jobs: this is my last for one while. I sha'n't go on two legs again this year."

The ladies came up with them.

"O monsieur!" said Josephine, "what is the matter?"

"We have met with a little accident, mademoiselle, that is all. Dard has hurt his foot; nothing to speak of, but I thought he would be best at home."

Rose raised the coat which Riviere, in spite of Dard, had flung over his foot.

"He is bleeding! Dard is bleeding! Oh, my poor Dard. Oh! oh!"

"Hush, Rose!"

"No, don't put him out of heart, mademoiselle. Take another pull at the flask, Dard. If you please, ladies, I must have him home without delay."

"Oh yes, but I want him to have a surgeon," cried Josephine. "And we have no horses nor people to send off as we used to have."

"But you have me, mademoiselle," said Edouard tenderly. "Me, who would go to the world's end for you." He said this to Josephine, but his eye sought Rose. "I'm a famous runner," he added, a little bumptiously; "I'll be at the town in half an hour, and send a surgeon up full gallop."

"You have a good heart," said Rose simply.

He bowed his blushing, delighted face, and wheeled Dard to his cottage hard by with almost more than mortal vigor. How softly, how nobly, that frolicsome girl could speak! Those sweet words rang in his ears and ran warm round and round his heart, as he straightened his arms and his back to the work. When they had gone about a hundred yards, a single snivel went off in the wheelbarrow. Five minutes after, Dard was at home in charge of his grandmother, his shoe off, his foot in a wet linen cloth; and Edouard, his coat tied round the neck, squared his shoulders, and ran the two short leagues out. He ran them in forty minutes, found the surgeon at home, told the case, pooh-poohed that worthy's promise to go to the patient presently, darted

into his stable, saddled the horse, brought him round, saw the surgeon into the saddle, started him, dined at the restaurateur's, strolled back, and was in time to get a good look at the château of Beaurepaire just as the sun set on it.

Jacintha came into Dard's cottage that evening.

"So you have been at it, my man," cried she cheerfully and rather roughly, then sat down and rocked herself, with her apron over her head. She explained this anomalous proceeding to his grandmother privately. "I thought I would keep his heart up anyway, but you see I was not fit."

Next morning, as Riviere sat writing, he received an unexpected visit from Jacintha. She came in with her finger to her lips, and said, "You prowl about Dard's cottage. They are sure to go and see him every day, and him wounded in their service."

"Oh, you good girl! you dear girl!" cried Edouard.

She did not reply in words, but, after going to the door, returned and gave him a great kiss without ceremony. "Dare say you know what that's for," said she, and went off with a clear conscience and reddish cheeks.

Dard's grandmother had a little house, a little land, a little money, and a little cow. She could just maintain Dard and herself, and her resources enabled Dard to do so many little odd jobs for love, yet keep his main organ tolerably filled.

"Go to bed, my little son, since you have got hashed," said she. — "Bed be hanged," cried he. "What good is bed? That's a silly old custom wants doing away with. It weakens you: it turns you into train oil: it is the doctor's friend, and the sick man's bane. Many a one dies through taking to bed, that could have kept his life if he had kept his feet like a man. If I had cut myself in two I would not go to bed, — till I go to the

bed with a spade in it. No! sit up like Julius Cæsar; and die as you lived, in your clothes: don't strip yourself: let the old women strip you; that is their delight laying out a chap; that is the time they brighten up, the old sorceresses." He concluded this amiable rhapsody, the latter part of which was levelled at a lugubrious weakness of his grandmother's for the superfluous embellishment of the dead, by telling her it was bad enough to be tied by the foot like an ass, without settling down on his back like a cast sheep. "Give me the armchair. I'll sit in it, and, if I have any friends, they will show it now: they will come and tell me what is going on in the village, for I can't get out to see it and hear it, they must know that."

Seated in state in his granny's easy-chair, the loss of which after thirty years' use made her miserable, she couldn't tell why, le Sieur Dard awaited his friends.

They did not come.

The rain did, and poured all the afternoon. Night succeeded, and solitude. Dard boiled over with bitterness. "They are a lot of pigs then, all those fellows I have drunk with at Bigot's and Simmet's. Down with all fair-weather friends."

The next day the sun shone, the air was clear, and the sky blue. "Ah! let us see now," cried Dard.

Alas! no fellow-drinkers, no fellow-smokers, came to console their hurt fellow. And Dard, who had boiled with anger yesterday, was now sad and despondent. "Down with egotists," he groaned.

About three in the afternoon came a tap at the door.

"Ah! at last," cried Dard: "come in!"

The door was slowly opened, and two lovely faces appeared at the threshold. The demoiselles De Beaurepaire wore a tender look of interest and pity when they caught sight of Dard, and on the old woman courtesying

to them they courtesied to her and Dard. The next moment they were close to him, one a little to his right, the other to his left, and two pair of sapphire eyes with the mild lustre of sympathy playing down incessantly upon him. How was he? How had he slept? Was he in pain? Was he in much pain? tell the truth now. Was there anything to eat or drink he could fancy? Jacintha should make it and bring it, if it was within their means. A prince could not have had more solicitous attendants, nor a fairy king lovelier and less earthly ones.

He looked in heavy amazement from one to the other. Rose bent, and was by some supple process on one knee, taking the measure of the wounded foot. When she first approached it he winced: but the next moment he smiled. He had never been touched like this — it was contact and no contact — she treated his foot as the zephyr the violets — she handled it as if it had been some sacred thing. By the help of his eye he could just know she was touching him. Presently she informed him he was measured for a list shoe: and she would run home for the materials. During her absence came a timid tap to the door; and Edouard Riviere entered. He was delighted to see Josephine, and made sure Rose was not far off. It was Dard who let out that she was gone to Beaurepaire for some cloth to make him a shoe. This information set Edouard fidgeting on his chair. He saw such a chance as was not likely to occur again. He rose with feigned *nonchalance*, and saying, "I leave you in good hands; angel visitors are best enjoyed alone," slowly retired, with a deep obeisance. Once outside the door, dignity vanished in alacrity; he flew off into the park, and ran as hard as he could towards the château. He was within fifty yards of the little gate, when sure enough Rose emerged. They met; his heart beat violently. "Mademoiselle," he faltered.

"Ah! it is Monsieur Riviere, I declare," said Rose, coolly; all over blushes though.

"Yes, mademoiselle, and I am so out of breath. Mademoiselle Josephine awaits you at Dard's house."

"She sent you for me?" inquired Rose, demurely.

"Not positively. But I could see I should please her by coming for you; there is, I believe, a bull or so about."

"A bull or two! don't talk in that reckless way about such things. She has done well to send you; let us make haste."

"But I am a little out of breath."

"Oh, never mind that! I abhor bulls."

"But, mademoiselle, we are not come to them yet, and the faster we go now the sooner we shall."

"Yes; but I always like to get a disagreeable thing over as soon as possible," said Rose, slyly.

"Ah," replied Edouard, mournfully, "in that case let us make haste."

After a little spurt, mademoiselle relaxed the pace of her own accord, and even went slower than before. There was an awkward silence. Edouard eyed the park boundary, and thought, "Now what I have to say I must say before we get to you;" and being thus impressed with the necessity of immediate action, he turned to lead.

Rose eyed him and the ground, alternately, from under her long lashes.

At last he began to color and flutter. She saw something was coming, and all the woman donned defensive armor.

"Mademoiselle."

"Monsieur."

"Is it quite decided that your family refuse my acquaintance, my services, which I still — forgive me — press on you? Ah! Mademoiselle Rose, am I never to have the happiness of — of — even speaking to you?"

"It seems so," said Rose, ironically.

"Have you then decided against me too?"

"I?" asked Rose. "What have I to do with questions of etiquette? I am only a child: so considered at least."

"You a child — an angel like you?"

"Ask any of them, they will tell you I am a child; and it is to that I owe this conversation, no doubt; if you did not look on me as a child, you would not take this liberty with me," said the young cat, scratching without a moment's notice.

"Mademoiselle, do not be angry. I was wrong."

"Oh! never mind. Children are little creatures without reserve, and treated accordingly, and to notice them is to honor them."

"Adieu then, mademoiselle. Try to believe no one respects you more than I do."

"Yes, let us part, for there is Dard's house; and I begin to suspect that Josephine never sent you."

"I confess it."

"There, he confesses it. I thought so all along; *what a dupe I have been!*"

"I will offend no more," said poor silly Edouard. "Adieu, mademoiselle. May you find friends as sincere as I am, and more to your taste!"

"Heaven hear your prayers!" replied the malicious thing, casting up her eyes with a mock tragic air.

Edouard sighed; a chill conviction that she was both heartless and empty fell on him. He turned away without another word. She called to him with a sudden airy cheerfulness that made him start. "Stay, monsieur, I forgot — I have a favor to ask you."

"I wish I could believe that:" and his eyes brightened.

Rose stopped, and began to play with her parasol. "You seem," said she softly, "to be pretty generous in bestowing your acquaintance on strangers. I should be

glad if I might secure you for a dear friend of mine, Dr. Aubertin. He will not discredit my recommendation; and he will not make so many difficulties as we do; shall I tell you why? Because he is really worth knowing. In short, believe me, it will be a valuable acquaintance for you — and for him," added she with all the grace of the De Beaurepaires.

Many a man, inferior in a general way to Edouard Riviere, would have made a sensible reply to this. Such as, "Oh, any friend of yours, mademoiselle, must be welcome to me," or the like. But the proposal caught Edouard on his foible, his vanity, to wit; and our foibles are our manias. He was mortified to the heart's core. "She refuses to know me herself," thought he, "but she will use my love to make me amuse that old man." His heart swelled against her injustice and ingratitude, and his crushed vanity turned to strychnine. "Mademoiselle," said he, bitterly and doggedly, but sadly, "were I so happy as to have your esteem, my heart would overflow, not only on the doctor but on every honest person around. But if I must not have the acquaintance I value more than life, suffer me to be alone in the world, and never to say a word either to Dr. Aubertin, or to any human creature if I can help it."

The imperious young beauty drew herself up directly. "So be it, monsieur; you teach me how a child should be answered that forgets herself, and asks a favor of a stranger — a perfect stranger," added she, maliciously.

Could one of the dog-days change to mid-winter in a second, it would hardly seem so cold and cross as Rose de Beaurepaire turned from the smiling, saucy fairy of the moment before. Edouard felt as it were a portcullis of ice come down between her and him. She courtesied and glided away. He bowed and stood frozen to the spot.

He felt so lonely and so bitter, he must go to Jacintha for comfort.

He took advantage of the ladies being with Dard, and marched boldly into the kitchen of Beaurepaire.

"Well, I never," cried Jacintha. "But, after all, why not?"

He hurled himself on the kitchen table (clean as china), and told her it was all over. "She hates me now; but it is not my fault," and so poured forth his tale, and feeling sure of sympathy, asked Jacintha whether it was not bitterly unjust of Rose to refuse him her own acquaintance, yet ask him to amuse that old fogy.

Jacintha stood with her great arms akimbo, taking it all in, and looking at him with a droll expression of satirical wonder.

"Now you listen to a parable," said she. "Once there was a little boy madly in love with raspberry jam."

"A thing I hate."

"Don't tell me! Who hates raspberry jam? He came to the store closet, where he knew there were jars of it, and — oh! misery — the door was locked. He kicked the door, and wept bitterly. His mamma came and said, 'Here is the key,' and gave him the key. And what did he do? Why, he fell to crying and roaring, and kicking the door. 'I don't wa-wa-wa-wa-nt the key-ey-ey. I wa-a-ant the jam — oh! oh! oh! oh!'" and Jacintha mimicked, after her fashion, the mingled grief and ire of infancy debarred its jam. Edouard wore a puzzled air, but it was only for a moment; the next he hid his face in his hands, and cried, "Fool!"

"I shall not contradict you," said his Mentor.

"She was my best friend. Once acquainted with the doctor, I could visit at Beaurepaire."

"*Parbleu!*"

"She had thought of a way to reconcile my wishes with this terrible etiquette that reigns here."

"She thinks to more purpose than you do; that is clear."

"Nothing is left now but to ask her pardon, and to consent; I am off."

"No, you are not," and Jacintha laid a grasp of iron on him. "Will you be quiet? — is not one blunder a day enough? If you go near her now, she will affront you, and order the doctor not to speak to you."

"O Jacintha! your sex then are fiends of malice?"

"While it lasts. Luckily with us nothing lasts very long. Now you don't go near her till you have taken advantage of her hint, and made the doctor's acquaintance; that is easy done. He walks two hours on the east road every day, with his feet in the puddles and his head in the clouds. Them's *his* two tastes."

"But how am I to get him out of the clouds and the puddles?" inquired Riviere half peevishly.

"How?" asked Jacintha, with a dash of that contempt uneducated persons generally have for any one who does not know some little thing they happen to know themselves. "How? Why, with the nearest black-beetle, to be sure."

"A blackbeetle?"

"Black or brown; it matters little. Have her ready for use in your handkerchief: pull a long face: and says you — 'Excuse me, sir, I have *the misfortune* not to know the Greek name of this merchandise here.' Say that, and behold him launched. He will christen you the beast in Hebrew and Latin as well as Greek, and tell you her history down from the flood: next he will beg her of you, and out will come a cork and a pin, and behold the creature impaled. For that is how men love beetles. He has a thousand pinned down at home — beetles, butterflies, and so forth. When I go near the rubbish with my duster he trembles like an aspen. I

pretend to be going to clean them, but it is only to see the face he makes, for even a domestic must laugh now and then — or die. But I never do clean them, for after all he is more stupid than wicked, poor man: I have not therefore the sad courage to make him wretched."

"Let us return to our beetle — what will his tirades about its antiquity advance me?"

"Oh! one begins about a beetle, but one ends Heaven knows where."

Riviere profited by this advice. He even improved on it. In due course he threw himself into Aubertin's way. He stopped the doctor reverentially, and said he had heard he was an entomologist. *Would* he be kind enough to tell him what was this enormous chrysalis he had just found?

"The death's head moth!" cried Aubertin with enthusiasm — "the death's head moth! a great rarity in this district. Where found you this?" Riviere undertook to show him the place.

It was half a league distant. Coming and going he had time to make friends with Aubertin, and this was the easier that the old gentleman, who was a physiognomist as well as ologist, had seen goodness and sensibility in Edouard's face. At the end of the walk he begged the doctor to accept the chrysalis. The doctor coquetted. "That would be a robbery. You take an interest in these things yourself — at least I hope so."

The young rogue confessed modestly to the sentiment of entomology, but "the government worked him so hard as to leave him no hopes of shining in so high a science," said he sorrowfully.

The doctor pitied him. "A young man of your attainments and tastes to be debarred from the everlasting secrets of nature, by the fleeting politics of the day."

Riviere shrugged his shoulders. "Somebody must do the dirty work," said he, chuckling inwardly.

The chrysalis went to Beaurepaire in the pocket of a grateful man, who that same evening told the whole party his conversation with young Riviere, on whom he pronounced high encomiums. Rose's saucy eyes sparkled with fun: you might have lighted a candle at one and exploded a mine at the other; but not a syllable did she utter.

The doctor proved a key, and opened the enchanted castle. One fine day he presented his friend in the Pleasaunce to the baroness and her daughters.

They received him with perfect politeness. Thus introduced, and as he was not one to let the grass grow under his feet, he soon obtained a footing as friend of the family, which, being now advised by Josephine, he took care not to compromise by making love to Rose before the baroness. However, he insisted on placing his financial talent at their service. He surveyed and valued their lands, and soon discovered that all their farms were grossly underlet. Luckily most of the leases were run out. He prepared a new rent roll, and showed it Aubertin, now his fast friend. Aubertin at his request obtained a list of the mortgages, and Edouard drew a balance-sheet founded on sure data, and proved to the baroness that in able hands the said estate was now solvent.

This was a great comfort to the old lady: and she said to Aubertin, "Heaven has sent us a champion, a little republican — with the face of an angel."

Descending to practice, Edouard actually put three of the farms into the market, and let them at an advance of twenty per cent on the expired leases. He brought these leases signed; and the baroness had scarcely done thanking him, when her other secret friend, Monsieur Perrin, was announced. Edouard exchanged civilities with him, and then retired to the Pleasaunce. There he

found both sisters, who were all tenderness and gratitude to him. By this time he had learned to value Josephine: she was so lovely and so good, and such a true womanly friend to him. Even Rose could not resist her influence, and was obliged to be kind to him, when Josephine was by. But let Josephine go, and instead of her being more tender, as any other girl would, left alone with her lover, sauciness resumed its empire till sweet Josephine returned. Whereof cometh an example; for the said Josephine was summoned to a final conference with the baroness and Monsieur Perrin.

"Don't be long," said Rose, as Josephine glided away, and (taking the precaution to wait till she was quite out of hearing), "I shall be so dull, dear, till you come back."

"I shall not though," said Edouard.

"I am not so sure of that. Now then."

"Now then, what?"

"Begin."

"Begin what?"

"Amusing me." And she made herself look sullen and unamusable all over.

"I will try," said Riviere. "I'll tell you what they say of you: that you are too young to love."

"So I am, much."

"No, no, no! I made a mistake. I mean too young to be loved."

"Oh, I am not too young for that, not a bit."

This point settled, she suggested that, if he could not amuse her, he had better do *the next best thing*, and that was, talk sense.

"I think I had better not talk at all," said he, "for I am no match for such a nimble tongue. And then you are so remorseless. I'll hold my tongue, and make a sketch of this magnificent oak."

"Ay, do: draw it as it appeared on a late occasion: with two ladies flying out of it, and you rooted with dismay."

"There is no need; that scene is engraved."

"Where? in all the shops?"

"No; on all our memories."

"Not on mine; not on mine. How terrified you were — ha, ha! and how terrified we should have been if you had not. Listen: once upon a time — don't be alarmed: it was long after Noah — a frightened hare ran by a pond; the frogs splashed in the water, smit with awe. Then she said, 'Ah ha! there are people in the world I frighten in my turn; I am the thunderbolt of war.' Excuse my quoting La Fontaine: I am not in 'Charles the Twelfth of Sweden' yet. I am but a child."

"And it's a great mercy, for when you grow up, you will be too much for me, that is evident. Come, then, Mademoiselle the Quizzer, come and adorn my sketch."

"Monsieur, shall I make you a confession? You will not be angry: I could not support your displeasure. I have a strange inclination to walk up and down this terrace while you go and draw that tree in the Pleasaunce."

"Resist that inclination; perhaps it will fly from you."

"No; you fly from me, and draw. I will rejoin you in a few minutes."

"Thank you, I'm not so stupid. You will step indoors directly."

"Do you doubt my word, sir?" asked she haughtily.

He had learned to obey all her caprices; so he went and placed himself on the west side of the oak and took out his sketch-book, and worked zealously and rapidly. He had done the outlines of the tree and was finish-

ing in detail a part of the huge trunk, when his eyes were suddedly dazzled: in the middle of the rugged bark, deformed here and there with great wart-like bosses, and wrinkled, seamed, and ploughed all over with age, burst a bit of variegated color; bright as a poppy on a dungeon wall, it glowed and glittered out through a large hole in the brown bark; it was Rose's face peeping. To our young lover's eye how divine it shone! None of the half tints of common flesh were there, but a thing all rose, lily, sapphire, and soul. His pencil dropped, his mouth opened, he was downright dazzled by the glowing, bewitching face, sparkling with fun, in the gaunt tree. Tell me, ladies, did she know, even at that age, the value of that sombre frame to her brightness? The moment she found herself detected, the gaunt old tree rang musical with a crystal laugh, and out came the arch-dryad. "I have been there all the time. How solemn you looked! Now for the result of such profound study." He showed her his work; she altered her tone. "Oh, how clever!" she cried, "and how rapid! What a facility you have! Monsieur is an artist," said she gravely; "I will be more respectful," and she dropped him a low courtesy. "Mind you promised it me," she added sharply.

"You will accept it, then?"

"That I will, now it is worth having: dear me, I never reckoned on that. Finish it directly," cried this peremptory young person.

"First I must trouble you to stand out there near the tree."

"Me? what for?"

"Because art loves contrasts. The tree is a picture of age and gradual decay; by its side then I must place a personification of youth and growing loveliness."

She did not answer, but made a sort of defiant pirou-

ette, and went where she was bid, and stood there with her back to the artist. "That will never do," said he; "you really must be so good as to turn round."

"Oh, very well." And when she came round, behold her color had risen mightily. Flattery is sweet.

This child of nature was delighted, and ashamed it should be seen that she was.

And so he drew her, and kept looking off the paper at her, and had a right in his character of artist to look her full in the face; and he did so with long lingering glances. To be sure, they all began severe and business-like with half-closed eyes, and the peculiar hostile expression art puts on; but then they always ended open-eyed, and so full and tender, that she, poor girl, who was all real gold, though sham brass, blushed and blushed, and did not know which way to look not to be scorched up by his eye like a tender flower, or blandly absorbed like the pearly dew. Ah, happy hour! ah, happy days of youth and innocence and first love!

Trouble loves to intrude on these halcyon days.

The usually quiet Josephine came flying from the house, pale and agitated, and clung despairingly to Rose, and then fell to sobbing and lamenting piteously.

I shall take leave to relate in my own words what had just occurred to agitate her so. When she entered her mother's room, she found the baroness and Perrin the notary seated watching for her. She sat down after the usual civilities, and Perrin entered upon the subject that had brought him.

He began by confessing to them that he had not overcome the refractory creditor without much trouble; and that he had since learned there was another, a larger creditor, likely to press for payment or for sale of the estate. The baroness was greatly troubled by this communication: the notary remained cool as a cucumber,

and keenly observant. After a pause he went on to say all this had caused him grave reflections. "It seems," said he with cool candor, "a sad pity the estate should pass from a family that has held it since the days of Charlemagne."

"Now God forbid!" cried the baroness, lifting her eyes and her quivering hands to heaven.

The notary held the republican creed in all its branches. "Providence, madame, does not interfere — in matters of business," said he. "Nothing but money can save the estate. Let us then be practical. Has any means occurred to you of raising money to pay off these incumbrances?"

"No. What means can there be? The estate is mortgaged to its full value: so they say, at least."

"And they say true," put in the notary quickly. "But do not distress yourself, madame: confide in me."

"Ah, my good friend, may Heaven reward you."

"Madame, up to the present time I have no complaint to make of Heaven. I am on the rise: here, mademoiselle, is a gimcrack they have given me;" and he unbuttoned his overcoat, and showed them a piece of tricolored ribbon and a clasp. "As for me, I look to 'the solid;' I care little for these things," said he, swelling visibly, "but the world is dazzled by them. However, I can show you something better." He took out a letter. "This is from the Minister of the Interior to a client of mine: a promise I shall be the next prefect; and the present prefect — I am happy to say — is on his death-bed. Thus, madame, your humble servant in a few short months will be notary no longer, but prefect; I shall then sell my office of notary: and I flatter myself when I am a prefect you will not blush to own me."

"Then, as now, monsieur," said the baroness politely, "we shall recognize your merit. But" —

"I understand, madame: like me you look to 'the solid.' Thus then it is; I have money."

"Ah! all the better for you."

"I have a good deal of money. But it is dispersed in a great many small but profitable investments: to call it in suddenly would entail some loss. Nevertheless, if you and my young lady there have ever so little of that friendly feeling towards me of which I have so much towards you, all my investments shall be called in, and two-thirds of your creditors shall be paid off at once. A single client of mine, no less a man than the Commandant Raynal, will, I am sure, advance me the remaining third at an hour's notice; and so Beaurepaire château, park, estate, and grounds, down to the old oak-tree, shall be saved; and no power shall alienate them from you, mademoiselle, and from the heirs of your body."

The baroness clasped her hands in ecstasy.

"But what are we to do for this?" inquired Josephine calmly, "for it seems to me that it can only be effected by a sacrifice on your part."

"I thank you, mademoiselle, for your penetration in seeing that I must make sacrifices. I would never have told you, but you have seen it; and I do not regret that you have seen it. Madame — mademoiselle — those sacrifices appear little to me; will seem nothing; will never be mentioned, or even alluded to after this day, if you, on your part, will lay me under a far heavier obligation, if in short" — here the contemner of things unsubstantial reopened his coat, and brought his ribbon to light again — "if you, madame, will accept me for your son-in-law — if you, mademoiselle, will take me for your husband."

The baroness and her daughter looked at one another in silence.

"Is it a jest?" inquired the former of the latter.

"Can you think so? Answer Monsieur Perrin. He has just done us a kind office, mother."

"I shall remember it. Monsieur, permit me to regret that having lately won our gratitude and esteem, you have taken this way of modifying those feelings. But after all," she added with gentle courtesy, "we may well put your good deeds against this — this error in judgment. The balance is in your favor still, provided you never return to this topic. Come, is it agreed?" The baroness's manner was full of tact, and the latter sentences were said with an open kindliness of manner. There was nothing to prevent Perrin from dropping the subject, and remaining good friends. A gentleman or a lover would have so done. Monsieur Perrin was neither. He said bitterly, "You refuse me, then."

The tone and the words were each singly too much for the baroness's pride. She answered coldly but civilly, —

"I do not refuse you. I do not take an affront into consideration."

"Be calm, mamma; no affront whatever was intended."

"Ah! here is one that is more reasonable," cried Perrin.

"There are men," continued Josephine without noticing him, "who look to but one thing — interest. It was an offer made politely in the way of business: decline it in the same spirit; that is what you have to do."

"Monsieur, you hear what mademoiselle says? She carries politeness a long way. After all it is a good fault. Well, monsieur, I need not answer you, since Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire has answered you; but I detain you no longer."

Strictly a weasel has no business with the temper of a tiger, but this one had, and the long vindictiveness of a Corsican. "Ah! my little lady, you turn me out of the house, do you?" cried he, grinding his teeth.

"Turn him out of the house? what a phrase! where has this man lived?"

"A man!" snarled Perrin, "whom none ever yet insulted without repenting it, and repenting in vain. You are under obligations to me, and you think to turn me out! You are at my mercy, and you think I will let you turn me to your door! In less than a month I will stand here, and say to you, Beaurepaire is mine. Begone from it!"

When he uttered these terrible words, each of which was like a sword-stroke to the baroness, the old lady, whose courage was not equal to her strength, shrank over the side of her arm-chair, and cried piteously — "He threatens me! he threatens me! I am frightened;" and put up her trembling hands, for the notary's eloquence, being accompanied with abundance of gesture, bordered upon physical violence. His brutality received an unexpected check. Imagine that a sparrow-hawk had seized a trembling pigeon, and that a royal falcon swooped, and with one lightning-like stroke of body and wing, buffeted him away, and sent him gaping and glaring and grasping at pigeonless air with his claws. So swift and majestic, Josephine de Beaurepaire came from her chair with one gesture of her body between her mother and the notary, who was advancing with arms folded in a brutal, menacing way — not the Josephine we have seen her, the calm languid beauty, but the demoiselle de Beaurepaire — her great heart on fire — her blood up — not her own only, but all the blood of all the De Beaurepaires — pale as ashes with great wrath, her purple eyes on fire, and her whole panther-like body full of spring. "Wretch! you dare to insult her, and before me! *Arrière misérable!* or I soil my hand with your face." And her hand was up with the word, up, up, higher it seemed than ever a hand was raised before. And if he had

hesitated one moment, I really believe it would have come down; not heavily, perhaps — the lightning is not heavy. But there was no need. The towering threat and the flaming eye and the swift rush buffeted the caitiff away: he recoiled. She followed him as he went, strong, *for a moment or two*, as Hercules, beautiful and terrible as Michael driving Satan. He dared not, or could not stand before her: he writhed and cowered and recoiled all down the room, while she marched upon him. But the driven serpent hissed horribly as it wriggled away.

"You shall both be turned out of Beaurepaire by me, and forever; I swear it, parole de Perrin."

He had not been gone a minute when Josephine's courage oozed away, and she ran, or rather tottered, into the Pleasaunce, and clung like a drowning thing to Rose, and, when Edouard took her hand, she clung to him. They had to gather what had happened how they could: the account was constantly interrupted with her sobs and self-reproaches. She said she had ruined all she loved: ruined her sister, ruined her mother, ruined the house of Beaurepaire. Why was she ever born? Why had she not died three years ago? (Query, what was the date at which Camille's letters suddenly stopped?) That coward," said she, "has the heart of a fiend. He told us he never forgave an affront; and he holds our fate in his hands. He will drive our mother from her home, and she will die: murdered by her own daughter. After all, why did I refuse him? What should I have sacrificed by marrying him? Rose, write to him, and say — say — I was taken by surprise, I — I" — a violent flood of tears interrupted the sentence.

Rose flung her arms round her neck. "My beautiful Josephine marry that creature? Let house and lands go a thousand times sooner. I love my sister a thou-

sand times better than the walls of this or any other house."

"Come, come," cried Edouard, "you are forgetting *me* all this time. Do you really think *I* am the sort of man to stand by with my hands in my pockets, and let her marry that cur, or you be driven out of Beaurepaire? Neither, while I live."

"Alas! dear boy," sighed Josephine, "what can you do?"

"I'll soon show you. From this hour forth it is a duel between that Perrin and me. Now, Josephine — Rose — don't you cry and fret like that: but just look quietly on, and enjoy the fight, both of you."

Josephine shook her head with a sad smile: but Rose delivered herself thus, after a sob, "La, yes; I forgot: we have got a gentleman now; that's one comfort."

Edouard rose to the situation: he saw that Perrin would lose no time; and that every day, or even hour, might be precious. He told them that the first thing he must do for them was to leave the company he loved best on earth, and run down to the town to consult Picard the rival notary: he would be back by supper-time, when he hoped they would do him the honor, in a matter of such importance, to admit him to a family council.

Josephine assented with perfect simplicity; Rose with a deep blush, for she was too quick not to see all the consequences of admitting so brisk a wooer into a family council.

It was a wet evening, and a sad and silent party sat round a wood fire in the great dining-hall. The baroness was almost prostrated by the scene with Perrin; and a sombre melancholy and foreboding weighed on all their spirits, when presently Edouard Riviere entered briskly, and saluted them all profoundly, and opened the proceed-

ings with a little favorite pomposity. "Madame the baroness, and you Monsieur Aubertin, who honor me with your esteem, and you Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, whom I adore, and you Mademoiselle Rose, whom I hoped to be permitted — you have this day done me the honor to admit me as your adviser. I am here to lay my plans before you. I believe, madame, I have already convinced you that your farms are under-let, and your property lowered in value by general mismanagement; this was doubtless known to Perrin, and set him scheming. Well, I rely on the same circumstance to defeat him. I have consulted Picard and shown him the rent-roll and balance-sheet I had already shown you. He has confessed that the estate is worth more than its debts, so capitalists can safely advance the money. To-morrow morning, then, I ride to Commandant Raynal for a week's leave of absence; then, armed with Picard's certificate, shall proceed to my uncle and ask him to lend the money. His estate is very small compared with Beaurepaire, but he has always farmed it himself. 'I'll have no go-between,' says he, 'to impoverish both self and soil.' He is also a bit of a misanthrope, and has made me one. I have a very poor opinion of my fellow-creatures, very."

"Well, but," said Rose, "if he is all that, he will not sympathize with us, who have so mismanaged Beaurepaire. Will he not despise us?"

Edouard was a little staggered, but Aubertin came to his aid.

"Permit me, Josephine," said he. "Natural history steps in here, and teaches by me, its mouth-piece. A misanthrope hates all mankind, but is kind to every individual, generally too kind. A philanthrope loves the whole human race, but dislikes his wife, his mother, his brother, and his friends and acquaintances. Misanthrope is the potato: rough and repulsive outside, but good to

the core. Philanthrope is a peach: his manner all velvet and bloom, his words sweet juice, his heart of hearts a stone. Let me read Philanthrope's book, and fall into the hands of Misanthrope."

Edouard admitted the shrewdness of this remark.

"And so," said he, "my misanthrope will say plenty of biting words, — which, by-the-by, will not hurt you, who will not hear them, only me, — and then he'll lend us the money, and Beaurepaire will be free, and I shall have had a hand in it. Hurrah!"

Then came a delicious hour to Edouard Riviere. Young and old poured out their glowing thanks and praises upon him till his cheeks burned like fire.

The baroness was especially grateful, and expressed a gentle regret that she could see no way of showing her gratitude except in words. "What can we do for this little angel?" said she, turning to Josephine.

"Leave that to me, mamma," replied Josephine, turning her lovely eyes full on Edouard, with a look the baroness misunderstood directly.

She sat and watched Josephine and Edouard with comical severity all the rest of the time she was there; and, when she retired, she kissed Rose affectionately, but whispered her eldest daughter, "I hope you are not serious. A mere boy compared with you."

"But such a sweet one," suggested Josephine, apologetically.

"What will the world come to?" said the baroness out loud, and retreated with a sour glance at all of them — except Rose.

She had not been gone five minutes when a letter came by messenger to Edouard. It was from Picard. He read it out.

"Perrin has been with me, to raise money. He wants it in forty-eight hours. Promises good legal security. I have agreed to try and arrange the matter for him."

They were all astonished at this.

"The double-faced traitor!" cried Edouard. "Stay; wait a minute. Let us read it to an end."

"This promise is, of course, merely to prevent his going elsewhere. At the end of the forty-eight hours I shall begin to make difficulties. Meantime, as Perrin is no fool, you had better profit to the full by this temporary delay."

"Well done, Picard!" shouted Edouard. "Notary cut notary. *I* won't lose an hour. I'll start at five; Commandant Raynal is an early riser himself."

Accordingly, at five he was on the road; Raynal's quarters lay in the direct line to his uncle's place. He found the commandant at home, and was well received. Raynal had observed his zeal, and liked his manners. He gave him the week's leave, and kept him to breakfast, and had his horse well fed. At eight o'clock Edouard rode out of the premises in high spirits. At the very gate he met a gaunt figure riding in on a squab pony. It was Perrin the notary coming in hot haste to his friend and employer, Commandant Raynal.

CHAPTER V.

After Edouard's departure, Josephine de Beaurepaire was sad, and weighed down with presentiments. She felt as soldiers sometimes feel who know the enemy is undermining them; no danger on the surface; nothing that can be seen, met, baffled, attacked, or evaded; in daily peril, all the more horrible that it imitates perfect serenity, they await the fatal match. She imparted her misgivings to Aubertin; but he assured her she exaggerated the danger.

"We have a friend still more zealous and active than our enemy; believe me, your depression is really caused by his absence; we all miss the contact of that young heroic spirit; we are a body, and he its soul."

Josephine was silent, for she said to herself, "Why should I dash their spirits? they are so happy and confident."

Edouard had animated Rose and Aubertin with his own courage, and had even revived the baroness.

It had been agreed between him and Picard that the latter should communicate with Dr. Aubertin direct, should anything fresh occur. And on the third day after Edouard's departure, Picard sent up a private message: "Perrin has just sent me a line to say he will not trouble us, as he is offered the money in another quarter."

This was a heavy blow, and sent them all to bed more or less despondent.

The next day brought a long letter from Edouard to Rose, telling her he had found his uncle crusty at first; but at last with a little patience, and the co-operation of

Martha, his uncle's old servant, and his nurse, the old boy had come round. They might look on the affair as all but settled.

The contents of this letter were conveyed to the baroness. The house brightened under it: the more so that there was some hope of their successful champion returning in person next day. Meantime Perrin had applied to Raynal for the immediate loan of a large sum of money on excellent security. Raynal refused plump. Perrin rode away disconsolate.

But the next day he returned to the charge with another proposal: and the nature of this second proposal we shall learn from events.

The day Edouard was expected opened deliciously. It was a balmy morning, and tempted the sisters out before breakfast. They strolled on the south terrace with their arms round each other's waists, talking about Edouard, and wondering whether they should really see him before night. Rose owned she had missed him, and confessed for the first time she was a proud and happy girl.

"May I tell him so?" asked Josephine.

"Not for all the world. Would you dare?"

Further discussion of that nice point was stopped by the baroness coming out, leaning on Dr. Aubertin.

Then — how we young people of an unceremonious age should have stared — the demoiselles de Beaurepaire, inasmuch as this was their mother's first appearance, lowered their fair heads at the same time like young poplars bowing to the wind, and so waited reverently till she had slightly lifted her hands, and said, "God bless you, my children!"

It was done in a moment on both sides, but full of grace and piety, and the charm of ancient manners.

"How did our dear mother sleep?" inquired Josephine.

Aubertin interposed with a theory that she slept very well indeed if she took what he gave her.

"Ay, *if*," suggested Rose, saucily.

"I slept," said the baroness, "and I wish I had not; for I dreamed an ugly dream." They all gathered round her, and she told her dream.

"I thought I was with you all in this garden. I was admiring the flowers and the trees, and the birds were singing with all their might. Suddenly a dark cloud came; it cleared almost directly; but flowers, trees, sky, and birds were gone now, and I could see the château itself no more. It means that I was dead. An ugly dream, my children, an ugly dream."

"But only a dream, dear mother," said Rose: then with a sweet, consoling smile, "See, here is your terrace and your château."

"And here are your daughters," said Josephine; and they both came and kissed her to put their existence out of doubt. "And here is your Æsculapius," said Aubertin. "And here is your Jacintha."

"Breakfast, madame," said Jacintha. "Breakfast, mesdemoiselles. Breakfast, monsieur:" dropping each a distinct courtesy in turn.

"She has turned the conversation very agreeably," said the baroness, and went in leaning on her old friend.

But the sisters lagged behind and took several turns in silence. Rose was the first to speak. "How superstitious of you!"

"I said nothing."

"No; but you looked volumes at me while mamma was telling her dream. For my part I feel sure love is stronger than hate; and we shall stay all our days in this sweet place: and O Josey! am I not a happy girl that it's all owing to *him!*"

At this moment Jacintha came running towards them.

They took it for a summons to breakfast, and moved to meet her. But they soon saw she was almost as white as her apron, and she came open-mouthed and wringing her hands. "What shall I do? what shall I do? Oh, don't let my poor mistress know!"

They soon got from her that Dard had just come from the town, and learned the château was sold, and the proprietor coming to take possession this very day. The poor girls were stupefied by the blow.

If anything, Josephine felt it worst. "It is my doing," she gasped, and tottered fainting. Rose supported her: she shook it off by a violent effort. "This is no time for weakness," she cried, wildly; "come to the Pleasaunce; there is water there. I love my mother. What will I not do for her? I love my mother."

Muttering thus wildly she made for the pond in the Pleasaunce. She had no sooner turned the angle of the château than she started back with a convulsive cry, and her momentary feebleness left her directly; she crouched against the wall and griped the ancient corner-stone with her tender hand till it powdered, and she spied with dilating eye into the Pleasaunce, Rose and Jacintha panting behind her. Two men stood with their backs turned to her looking at the oak-tree; one an officer in full uniform, the other the human snake Perrin. Though the soldier's back was turned, his off-handed, peremptory manner told her he was inspecting the place as its master.

"The baroness! the baroness!" cried Jacintha, with horror. They looked round, and the baroness was at their very backs.

"What is it?" cried she, gayly.

"Nothing, mamma."

"Let me see this nothing."

They glanced at one another, and, idle as the attempt was, the habit of sparing her prevailed, and they flung themselves between her and the blow.

"Josephine is not well," said Rose. "She wants to go in." Both girls faced the baroness.

"Jacintha," said the baroness, "fetch Dr. Aubertin. There, I have sent her away. So now tell me, why do you drive me back so? Something has happened," and she looked keenly from one to the other.

"O mamma! do not go that way: there are strangers in the Pleasaunce."

"Let me see. So there are. Call Jacintha back that I may order these people out of my premises." Josephine implored her to be calm.

"Be calm when impertinent intruders come into my garden?"

"Mother, they are not intruders."

"What do you mean?"

"They have a right to be in our Pleasaunce. They have bought the château."

"It is impossible. *He* was to buy it for us — there is some mistake — what man would kill a poor old woman like me? I will speak to this gentleman: he wears a sword. Soldiers do not trample on women. Ah! that man."

The notary, attracted by her voice, was coming towards her, a paper in his hand.

Raynal coolly inspected the tree, and tapped it with his scabbard, and left Perrin to do the dirty work. The notary took off his hat, and, with a malignant affectation of respect, presented the baroness with a paper.

The poor old thing took it with a courtesy, the effect of habit, and read it to her daughters as well as her emotion permitted, and the language, which was as new to her as the dialect of Cat Island to Columbus.

"Jean Raynal, domiciled by right, and lodging in fact at the Château of Beaurepaire, acting by the pursuit and diligence

of Master Perrin, notary; I, Guillaume Le Gras, bailiff, give notice to Josephine Aglae St. Croix de Beaurepaire, commonly called the Baroness de Beaurepaire, having no known place of abode" —

"Oh!"

"but lodging wrongfully at the said Château of Beaurepaire, that she is warned to decamp within twenty-four hours" —

"To decamp!"

"failing which that she will be thereto enforced in the manner for that case made and provided with the aid of all the officers and agents of the public force."

"Ah! no, messieurs, pray do not use force. I am frightened enough already. I did not know I was doing anything wrong. I have been here thirty years. But, since Beaurepaire is sold, I comprehend perfectly that I must go. It is just. As you say, I am not in my own house. I will go, gentlemen, I will go. Whither shall I go, my children? The house where you were born to me is ours no longer. Excuse me, gentlemen — this is nothing to you. Ah! sir, you have revenged yourself on two weak women — may Heaven forgive you!"

The notary turned on his heel. The poor baroness, all whose pride the iron law, with its iron gripe, had crushed into dismay and terror, appealed to him. "O sir! send me from the house, but not from the soil where my Henri is laid! is there not in all this domain a corner where she who was its mistress may lie down and die? Where is the *new baron*, that I may ask this favor of him on my knees?"

She turned towards Raynal and seemed to be going towards him with outstretched arms. But Rose checked her with fervor. "Mamma! do not lower yourself. Ask nothing of these wretches. Let us lose all, but not forget ourselves."

The baroness had not her daughter's spirit. Her very person tottered under this blow. Josephine supported her, and the next moment Aubertin came out and hastened to her side. Her head fell back; what little strength she had failed her; she was half lifted, half led, into the house.

Commandant Raynal was amazed at all this, and asked what the deuce was the matter.

"Oh!" said the notary, "we are used to these little scenes in our business."

"But I am not," replied the soldier. "You never told me there was to be all this fuss."

He then dismissed his friend rather abruptly and strode up and down the Pleasaunce. He twisted his mustaches, muttered, and "*pested*," and was ill at ease. Accustomed to march gayly into a town, and see the regiment, that was there before, marching gayly out, or *vice versâ*, and to strike tents twice a quarter at least, he was little prepared for such a scene as this. True, he did not hear all the baroness's words, but more than one tone of sharp distress reached him where he stood, and the action of the whole scene was so expressive, there was little need of words. He saw the notice given; the dismay it caused, and the old lady turn imploringly towards him with a speaking gesture, and above all he saw her carried away, half fainting, her hands clasped, her reverend face pale. He was not a man of quick sensibilities. He did not thoroughly take the scene in at first: it grew upon him afterwards.

"Confound it," thought he, "I am the proprietor. They all say so. Instead of which I feel like a thief. Fancy her getting so fond of a *place* as all this."

Presently it occurred to him that the shortness of the notice might have much to do with her distress. "These notaries," said he to himself, "understand nothing save

law: women have piles of baggage, and can't strike tents directly the order comes, as we can. Perhaps if I were to give them twenty-four days instead of hours?—hum!"

With this the commandant fell into a brown study. Now each of us has his attitude of brown study. One runs about the room like hyena in his den; another stands stately with folded arms (this one seldom thinks to the purpose); another sits cross-legged, brows lowered: another must put his head into his hand, and so keep it up to thinking mark: another must twiddle a bit of string, or a key; grant him this, he can hatch an epic. This commandant must draw himself up very straight, and walk six paces and back very slowly, till the problem was solved: I suspect he had done a good bit of sentinel work in his time.

Now whilst he was guarding the old oak-tree, for all the world as if it had been the gate of the Tuileries or the barracks, Josephine de Beaurepaire came suddenly out from the house and crossed the Pleasaunce: her hair was in disorder, her manner wild: she passed swiftly into the park.

Raynal recognized her as one of the family; and after a moment's reflection followed her into the park with the good-natured intention of offering her a month to clear out instead of a day.

But it was not so easy to catch her: she flew. He had to take his scabbard in his left hand and fairly run after her. Before he could catch her, she entered the little chapel. He came up and had his foot on the very step to go in, when he was arrested by that he heard within.

Josephine had thrown herself on her knees and was praying aloud: praying to the Virgin with sighs and sobs and all her soul: wrestling so in prayer with a dead

saint as by a strange perversity men cannot or will not wrestle with Him, who alone can hear a million prayers at once from a million different places, — can realize and be touched with a sense of all man's infirmities in a way no single saint with his partial experience of them can realize and be touched by them; who unasked suspended the laws of nature that had taken a stranger's only son, and she a widow; and wept at another great human sorrow, while the eyes of all the great saints that stood around it and Him were dry.

Well, the soldier stood, his right foot on the step and his sword in his left hand, transfixed: listening gravely to the agony of prayer the innocent young creature poured forth within: —

"O Madonna! hear me: it is for my mother's life. She will die — she will die. You know she cannot live if she is taken away from her house and from this holy place where she prays to you this many years. O Queen of Heaven! put out your hand to us unfortunates! Virgin, hear a virgin: mother, listen to a child who prays for her mother's life! The doctor says she will not live away from here. She is too old to wander over the world. Let them drive us forth: we are young, but not her, mother, oh, not her! Forgive the cruel men that do this thing! — they are like those who crucified your Son — they know not what they are doing. But you, Queen of Heaven, you know all; and, sweet mother, if you have kind sentiments towards me, poor Josephine, ah! show them now: for you know that it was I who insulted that wicked notary, and it is out of hatred to me he has sold our beloved house to a hard stranger. Look down on me, a child who loves her mother, yet will destroy her unless you pity me and help me. Oh! what shall I say? — what shall I do? mercy! mercy! for my poor mother, for me!"

Here her utterance was broken by sobs.

The soldier withdrew his foot quietly. Her words had knocked against his very breast-bone. He marched slowly to and fro before the chapel, upright as a dart, and stiff as a ramrod, and actually pale: for even our nerves have their habits; a woman's passionate grief shook him as a cannon fired over his head could not.

Josephine little thought who was her sentinel. She came to the door at last, and there he was marching backwards and forwards, upright and stiff. She gave a faint scream and drew back with a shudder at the sight of their persecutor. She even felt faintish at him, as women will in such cases.

Not being very quick at interpreting emotion, Raynal noticed her alarm, but not her repugnance; he saluted her with military precision by touching his cap as only a soldier can, and said rather gently for him, "A word with you, mademoiselle."

She replied only by trembling.

"Don't be frightened," said Raynal, in a tone not very reassuring. "I propose an armistice."

"I am at your disposal, sir," said Josephine, now assuming a calmness that was belied by the long swell of her heaving bosom.

"Of course you look on me as an enemy."

"How can I do otherwise, sir? yet perhaps I ought not. You did not know us. You just wanted an estate, I suppose — and — oh!"

"Well, don't cry; and let us come to the point, since I am a man of few words."

"If you please, sir. My mother may miss me."

"Well, I was in position on your flank when the notary delivered his fire. And I saw the old woman's distress."

"Ah, sir!"

"When you came flying out I followed to say a good word to you. I could not catch you. I listened while you prayed to the Virgin. That was not a soldier-like trick, you will say. I confess it."

"It matters little, sir, and you heard nothing I blush for."

"No! by St. Denis; quite the contrary. Well, to the point. Young lady, you love your mother."

"What has she on earth now but her children's love?"

"Now look here, young lady, I had a mother; I loved her in my humdrum way very dearly. She promised me faithfully not to die till I should be a colonel; and she went and died before I was a commandant, even; just before, too."

"Then I pity you," murmured Josephine; and her soft purple eye began to dwell on him with less repugnance.

"Thank you for that word, my good young lady," said Raynal. "Now, I declare, you are the first that has said that word to me about my losing the true friend, that nursed me on her knee, and pinched and pinched to make a man of me. I should like to tell you about her and me."

"I shall feel honored," said Josephine, politely, but with considerable restraint.

Then he told her all about how he had vexed her when he was a boy, and gone for a soldier, though she was all for trade, and how he had been the more anxious to see her enjoy his honors and success. "And, mademoiselle," said he, appealingly, "the day this epaulet was put on my shoulder in Italy, she died in Paris. Ah! how could you have the heart to do that, my old woman?"

The soldier's mustache quivered, and he turned away brusquely, and took several steps. Then he came back

to Josephine, and to his infinite surprise saw that her purple eyes were thick with tears. "What? you are within an inch of crying for my mother, you who have your own trouble at this hour."

"Monsieur, our situations are so alike, I may well spare some little sympathy for your misfortune."

"Thank you, my good young lady. Well, then, to business; while you were praying to the Virgin, I was saying a word or two for my part to her who is no more."

"Sir!"

"Oh! it was nothing beautiful like the things you said to the other. Can I turn phrases? I saw her behind her little counter in the Rue Quincampoix; for she is a woman of the people, is my mother. I saw myself come to the other side of the counter, and I said, 'Look here, mother, here is the devil to pay about this new house. The old woman talks of dying if we take her from her home, and the young one weeps and prays to all the saints in paradise; what shall we do, eh?' Then I thought my old woman said to me, 'Jean, you are a soldier, a sort of vagabond; what do you want with a house in France? you who are always in a tent in Italy or Austria, or who knows where. Have you the courage to give honest folk so much pain for a caprice? Come now,' says she, 'the lady is of my age, say you, and I can't keep your fine house, because God has willed it otherwise; so give her my place; so then you can fancy it is me you have set down at your hearth: that will warm your heart up a bit, you little scamp,' said my old woman in her rough way. She was not well-bred like you, mademoiselle. A woman of the people, nothing more."

"She was a woman of God's own making, if she was like that," cried Josephine, the tears now running down her cheeks.

"Ah, that she was, she was. So between her and me it is settled — what are you crying for *now?* why, you have won the day; the field is yours; your mother and you remain; I decamp." He whipped his scabbard up with his left hand, and was going off without another word, if Josephine had not stopped him.

"But, sir, what am I to think? what am I to hope? it is impossible that in this short interview — and we must not forget what is due to you. You have bought the estate."

"True; well, we will talk over that, to-morrow; but being turned out of the house, that was the bayonet thrust to the old lady. So you run in and put her heart at rest about it. Tell her that she may live and die in this house for Jean Raynal; and tell her about the old woman in the Rue Quincampoix."

"God bless you, Jean Raynal!" cried Josephine, clasping her hands.

"Are you going?" said he, peremptorily.

"Oh, yes!" and she darted towards the château.

But when she had taken three steps she paused, and seemed irresolute. She turned, and in a moment she had glided to Raynal again and had taken his hand before he could hinder her, and pressed two velvet lips on it, and was away again, her cheeks scarlet at what she had done, and her wet eyes beaming with joy. She skimmed the grass like a lapwing; you would have taken her at this minute for Rose, or for Virgil's Camilla; at the gate she turned an instant and clasped her hands together, with such a look, to show Raynal she blessed him again, then darted into the house.

"Aha, my lady," said he, as he watched her fly, "behold you changed a little since you came out." He was soon on the high road marching down to the town at a great rate, his sword clanking, and thus ran his

thoughts: "This does one good; you are right, my old woman. Your son's bosom feels as warm as toast. Long live the five-franc pieces! And they pretend money cannot make a fellow happy. They lie; it is because they do not know how to spend it."

Meantime at the château, as still befalls in emergencies and trials, the master spirit came out and took its real place. Rose was now the mistress of Beaurepaire; she set Jacintha, and Dard, and the doctor, to pack up everything of value in the house. "Do it this moment!" she cried; "once that notary gets possession of the house, it may be too late. Enough of folly and helplessness. We have fooled away house and lands; our movables shall not follow them."

The moment she had set the others to work, she wrote a single line to Riviere to tell him the château and lands were sold, and would he come to Beaurepaire at once? She ran with it herself to Bigot's auberge, the nearest post-office, and then back to comfort her mother.

The baroness was seated in her arm-chair, moaning and wringing her hands, and Rose was nursing and soothing her, and bathing her temples with her last drop of *eau de Cologne*, and trying in vain to put some of her own courage into her, when in came Josephine radiant with happiness, crying "Joy! joy! joy!" and told her strange tale, with this difference, that she related her own share in it briefly and coldly, and was more eloquent than I about the strange soldier's goodness, and the interest her mother had awakened in his heart. And she told about the old woman in the Rue Quincampoix, her rugged phrases, and her noble, tender heart. The baroness, deaf to Rose's consolations, brightened up directly at Josephine's news, and at her glowing face, as she knelt pouring the good news, and hope, and comfort, point blank into her. But Rose chilled them both.

"It is a generous offer," said she, "but one we cannot accept. We cannot live under so great an obligation. Is all the generosity to be on the side of this Bonapartist? Are we noble in name only? What would our father have said to such a proposal?"

Josephine hung her head. The baroness groaned.

"No, mother," continued Rose; "let house and land go, but honor and true nobility remain."

"What shall I do? you are cruel to me, Rose."

"Mamma," cried the enthusiastic girl, "we need depend on no one. Josephine and I have youth and spirit."

"But no money."

"We have plenty of jewels, and pictures, and movables. We can take a farm."

"A farm!" shrieked the baroness.

"Why, his uncle has a farm, and we have had recourse to him for help: better a farmhouse than an almshouse, though that almshouse were a palace instead of a château."

Josephine winced and held up her hand deprecatingly. The baroness paled: it was a terrible stroke of language to come from her daughter. She said sternly, "There is no answer to that. We were born nobles, let us die farmers: only permit me to die first."

"Forgive me, mother," said Rose, kneeling. "I was wrong; it is for me to obey you, not to dictate. I speak no more." And, after kissing her mother and Josephine, she crept away, but she left her words sticking in both their consciences.

"*His* uncle," said the shrewd old lady. "She is no longer a child; and she says HIS uncle. This makes me half suspect it is her that dear boy — Josephine, tell me the truth, which of you is it?"

"Dear mother, who should it be? they are nearly of

an age: and what man would not love our sweet Rose, that had eyes or a heart?"

The baroness sighed deeply; and was silent. After awhile she said, "The moment they have a lover, he detaches their hearts from their poor old mother. She is no longer what my Josephine is to me."

"Mamma, she is my superior. I see it more and more every day. She is proud: she is just; she looks at both sides. As for me, I am too apt to see only what will please those I love."

"And that is the daughter for me," cried the poor baroness, opening her arms wide to her.

The next morning when they were at breakfast, in came Jacintha to say the officer was in the dining-room and wanted to speak with the young lady he talked to yesterday. Josephine rose and went to him. "Well, mademoiselle," said he gayly, "the old woman was right. Here I have just got my orders to march: to leave France in a month. A pretty business it would have been if I had turned your mother out. So you see there is nothing to hinder you from living here."

"In your house, sir?"

"Why not, pray?"

"Forgive us. But we feel that would be unjust to you, humiliating to us: the poor are sometimes proud."

"Of course they are," said Raynal: "and I don't want to offend your pride. Confound the house: why did I go and buy it? It is no use to me except to give pain to worthy people." He then, after a moment's reflection, asked her if the matter could not be arranged by some third party, a mutual friend. "Then again," said he, "I don't know any friend of yours."

"Yes, sir," said Josephine; "we have one friend, who knows you, and esteems you highly."

She wanted to name Edouard; but she hesitated, and

asked her conscience if it was fair to name him: and while she blushed and hesitated, lo and behold a rival referee hove in sight. Raynal saw him, suddenly opened a window, and shouted, "Hallo! come in here: you are wanted."

Perrin had ridden up to complete the exodus of the De Beaurepaires, and was strolling about inspecting the premises he had expelled them from.

Here was a pretty referee!

Josephine almost screamed — "What are you doing? that is our enemy, our bitterest enemy. He has only sold you the estate to spite us, not for the love of you. I had — we had — we mortified his vanity. It was not our fault: he is a viper. Sir, pray, pray, pray be on your guard against his counsels."

These words spoken with rare fire and earnestness carried conviction: but it was too late to recall the invitation. The notary entered the room, and was going to bow obsequiously to Raynal, when he caught sight of Josephine, and almost started. Raynal, after Josephine's warning, was a little at a loss how to make him available; and even that short delay gave the notary's one foible time to lead him into temptation. "Our foibles are our manias."

"So," said he, "you have taken possession, commandant. These military men are prompt, are they not, mademoiselle?"

"Do not address yourself to me, sir, I beg," said Josephine quietly.

Perrin kept his self-command. "It is only as Commandant Raynal's agent I presume to address so distinguished a lady: in that character I must inform you that whatever movables you have removed are yours: those we find in the house on entering we keep."

"Come, come, not so fast," cried Raynal; "bother the chairs and tables! that is not the point."

"Commandant," said the notary with dignity, "have I done anything to merit this? have I served your interests so ill that you withdraw your confidence from me?"

"No, no, my good fellow; but you exceed your powers. Just now I want you to take orders, not give them."

"That is only just," said Perrin, "and I recall my hasty remark: excuse the susceptibility of a professional man, who is honored with the esteem of his clients; and favor me with your wishes."

"All right," said Raynal heartily. "Well, then — I want mademoiselle and her family to stay here while I go to Egypt with the First Consul. Mademoiselle makes difficulties; it offends her delicacy."

"Comedy!" said the notary contemptuously.

"Though her mother's life depends on her staying here."

"Comedy!" said Perrin. Raynal frowned.

"Her pride (begging her pardon) is greater than her affection."

"Farce!"

"I have pitched upon you to reconcile the two."

"Then you have pitched upon the wrong man," said Perrin bluntly. He added obsequiously, "I am too much your friend. She has been talking you over, no doubt; but you have a friend, an Ulysses, who is deaf to the siren's voice. I will be no party to such a transaction. I will not co-operate to humbug my friend and rob him of his rights."

If Josephine was inferior to the notary in petty sharpness, she was his superior in the higher kinds of sagacity; and particularly in instinctive perception of character. Her eye flashed with delight at the line Perrin was now taking with Raynal. The latter speedily justified her expectations: he just told Perrin to be off, and send him a more accommodating notary.

"A more accommodating notary!" screamed Perrin, stung to madness by this reproach. "There is not a more accommodating notary in Europe. Ungrateful man! is this the return for all my zeal, my integrity, my unselfishness? Is there another agent in the world who would have let such a bargain as Beaurepaire fall into your hands? It serves me right for deviating from the rules of business. Send me another agent — oh!"

The honest soldier was confused. The lawyer's eloquence overpowered him. He felt guilty. Josephine saw his simplicity, and made a cut with a woman's two-edged sword. "Sir," said she coolly, "do you not see it is an affair of money? This is his way of saying, Pay me handsomely for so unusual a commission."

"And I'll pay him double," cried Raynal, catching the idea; "don't be alarmed, I'll pay you for it."

"And my zeal, my devotion?"

"Put 'em in figures."

"And my prob— ?"

"Add it up."

"And my integ— ?"

"Add them together: and don't bother me."

"I see! I see! my poor soldier. You are no match for a woman's tongue."

"Nor for a notary's. Go to h—, and send in your bill!" roared the soldier in a fury. "Well, will you go?" and he marched at him.

The notary scuttled out, with something between a snarl and a squeak.

Josephine hid her face in her hands.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired Raynal. "Not crying again, surely!"

"Me! I never cry — hardly. I hid my face because I could not help laughing. You frightened me, sir," said she: then very demurely, "I was afraid you were going to beat him."

"No, no; a good soldier never leathers a civilian if he can possibly help it; it looks so bad; and before a lady!"

"Oh, I would have forgiven you, monsieur," said Josephine benignly, and something like a little sun danced in her eye.

"Now, mademoiselle, since my referee has proved a pig, it is your turn. Choose you a mutual friend."

Josephine hesitated. "Ours is so young. You know him very well. You are doubtless the commandant of whom I once heard him speak with such admiration: his name is Riviere, Edouard Riviere."

"Know him? he is my best officer, out and out." And without a moment's hesitation he took Edouard's present address, and accepted that youthful Daniel as their referee; then looked at his watch and marched off to his public duties with sabre clanking at his heels.

The notary went home gnashing his teeth. His sweet revenge was turned to wormwood this day. Raynal's parting commissions rang in his ear; in his bitter mood the want of logical sequence in the two orders disgusted him.

So he inverted them.

He sent in a thundering bill the very next morning, but postponed the other commission till his dying day.

As for Josephine, she came into the drawing-room beaming with love and happiness, and after kissing both her mother and Rose with gentle violence, she let them know the strange turn things had taken.

And she whispered to Rose, "Only think, *your* Edouard to be *our* referee!"

Rose blushed and bent over her work; and wondered how Edouard would discharge so grave an office.

The matter approached a climax; for, as the reader is aware, Edouard was hourly expected at Beaurepaire.

He did not come; but it was not his fault. On receiv

ing Rose's letter he declined to stay another hour at his uncle's.

He flung himself on his horse; and, before he was well settled on the stirrups, the animal shied violently at a wheelbarrow some fool had left there; and threw Edouard on the stones of the courtyard. He jumped up in a moment and laughed at Marthe's terror; meantime a farm-servant caught the nag and brought him back to his work.

But when Edouard went to put his hand on the saddle, he found it would not obey him. "Wait a minute," said he; "my arm is benumbed."

"Let me see!" said the farmer, and examined the limb himself; "benumbed? yes; and no wonder. Jacques, get on the brute and ride for the surgeon."

"Are you mad, uncle?" cried Edouard. "I can't spare my horse, and I want no surgeon; it will be well directly."

"It will be worse before it is better."

"I don't know what you mean, uncle; it is only numbed, ah! it hurts when I rub it."

"It is worse than numbed, boy; it is broken."

"Broken? nonsense:" and he looked at it in piteous bewilderment: "how can it be broken? it does not hurt except when I touch it."

"It *will* hurt: I know all about it. I broke mine fifteen years ago: fell off a haystack."

"Oh, how unfortunate I am!" cried Edouard, piteously. "But I will go to Beaurepaire all the same. I can have the thing mended there, as well as here."

"You will go to bed," said the old man, quietly; "that is where *you'll* go."

"I'll go to blazes sooner," yelled the young one.

The old man made a signal to his myrmidons, whom Marthe's cries had brought around, and four stout fellows took hold of Edouard by the legs and the left shoulder

and carried him up-stairs raging and kicking; and deposited him on a bed.

Presently he began to feel faint, and so more reasonable. They cut his coat off, and put him in a loose wrapper, and after considerable delay the surgeon came, and set his arm skilfully, and behold this ardent spirit caged. He chafed and fretted sadly. Fortitude was not his forte.

It was two days after his accident. He was lying on his back, environed by slops and cursing his evil fate, and fretting his soul out of its fleshly prison, when suddenly he heard a cheerful trombone saying three words to Marthe, then came a clink-clank, and Marthe ushered into the sickroom the Commandant Raynal. The sick man raised himself in bed, with great surprise and joy.

"O commandant! this is kind to come and see your poor officer in purgatory."

"Ah," cried Raynal, "you see I know what it is. I have been chained down by the arm, and the leg, and all: it is deadly tiresome."

"Tiresome! it is — it is — oh, dear commandant, Heaven bless you for coming!"

"Ta! ta! ta! I am come on my own business."

"All the better. I have nothing to do; that is what kills me. I'm eating my own heart."

"Cannibal! Well, my lad, since you are in that humor, cheer up, for I bring you a job, and a tough one; it has puzzled me."

"What is it, commandant? What is it?"

"Well, do you know a house and a family called Beaurepaire?"

"Do I know Beaurepaire?"

And the pale youth turned very red; and stared with awe at this wizard of a commandant. He thought he was going to be called over the coals for frequenting a

disaffected family. "Well," said Raynal, "I have been and bought this Beaurepaire."

Edouard uttered a loud exclamation. "It was *you* bought it! she never told me that."

"Yes," said Raynal, "I am the culprit; and we have fixed on you to undo my work without hurting their pride too much, poor souls; but let us begin with the facts."

Then Raynal told him my story after his fashion. Of course I shall not go and print his version; you might like his concise way better than my verbose; and I'm not here to hold up any man's coat-tails. Short as he made it, Edouard's eyes were moist more than once; and at the end he caught Raynal's hand and kissed it. Then he asked time to reflect; "for," said he, "I must try and be just."

"I'll give you an hour," said Raynal, with an air of grand munificence. The only treasure he valued was time.

In less than an hour Edouard had solved the knot, to his entire satisfaction; he even gave the commandant particular instructions for carrying out his sovereign decree. Raynal received these orders from his subordinate with that simplicity which formed part of his amazing character, and rode home relieved of all responsibility in the matter.

COMMANDANT RAYNAL TO MADEMOISELLE DE BEAUREPAIRE.

Mademoiselle, — Before I could find time to write to our referee, news came in that he had just broken his arm; —

"Oh! oh, dear! our poor Edouard!"

And if poor Edouard had seen the pale faces, and heard the faltering accents, it would have reconciled him to his broken arm almost. This hand-grenade the commandant had dropped so coolly among them, it was a long while ere they could recover from it enough to read the rest of the letter, —

so I rode over to him, and found him on his back, fretting for want of something to do. I told him the whole story. He undertook the business. I have received his instructions, and next week shall be at his quarters to clear off his arrears of business, and make acquaintance with all your family, if they permit.

RAYNAL.

As the latter part of this letter seemed to require a reply, the baroness wrote a polite note, and Jacintha sent Dard to leave it for the commandant at Riviere's lodgings. But first they all sat down and wrote kind and pitying and soothing letters to Edouard. Need I say these letters fell upon him like balm?

They all inquired carelessly in their postscripts what he had decided as their referee. He replied mysteriously that they would know that in a week or two. Meantime, all he thought it prudent to tell them was that he had endeavored to be just to both parties.

"Little solemn puppy," said Rose, and was racked with curiosity.

Next week Raynal called on the baroness. She received him alone. They talked about Madame Raynal. The next day he dined with the whole party, and the commandant's manners were the opposite of what the baroness had inculcated. But she had a strong prejudice in his favor. Had her feelings been the other way his *brusquerie* would have shocked her. It amused her. If people's hearts are with you, *that* for their heads!

He came every day for a week, chatted with the baroness, walked with the young ladies; and when after work he came over in the evening, Rose used to cross-examine him, and out came such descriptions of battles and sieges, such heroism and such simplicity mixed, as made the evening pass delightfully. On these occasions the young ladies fixed their glowing eyes on him, and drank in his

character as well as his narrative, in which were fewer "I's" than in anything of the sort you ever read or heard.

At length Rose contrived to draw him aside, and, hiding her curiosity under feigned *nonchalance*, asked him what the referee had decided. He told her that was a secret for the present.

"Well, but," said Rose, "not from me. Edouard and I have no secrets."

"Come, that's good," said Raynal. "Why, you are the very one he warned me against the most; said you were as curious as Mother Eve, and as sharp as her needle."

"Then he is a little scurrilous traitor," cried Rose, turning very red. "So that is how he talks of me behind my back, and calls me an angel to my face; I'll pay him for this. Do tell me, commandant; never mind what *he* says."

"What! disobey orders?"

"Orders? to you from that boy!"

"Oh!" said Raynal, "for that matter, we soldiers are used to command one moment, and obey the next."

In a word, this military pedant was impracticable, and Rose gave him up in disgust, and began to call up a sulky look when the other two sang his praises. For the old lady pronounced him charming, and Josephine said he was a man of crystal; never said a word he did not mean, and she wished she was like him. But the baroness thought this was going a little too far.

"No, thank you," said she hastily; "he is a man, a thorough man. He would make an intolerable woman. A fine life if one had a parcel of women about, all blurting out their real minds every moment, and never smoothing matters."

"Mamma, what a horrid picture!" chuckled Rose.

She then proposed that at his next visit they should all three make an earnest appeal to him to let them know what Edouard had decided.

But Josephine begged to be excused, feared it would be hardly delicate; and said languidly that for her part she felt they were in good hands, and prescribed patience. The baroness acquiesced, and poor Rose and her curiosity were baffled on every side.

At last, one fine day, her torments were relieved without any further exertion on her part. Jacintha bounced into the drawing-room with a notice that the commandant wanted to speak to Josephine a minute out in the Pleasaunce.

"How droll he is," said Rose; "fancy sending in for a young lady like that. Don't go, Josephine; how he would stare."

"My dear, I no more dare disobey him than if I was one of his soldiers." And she laid down her work, and rose quietly to do what she was bid.

"Well," said Rose, superciliously, "go to your commanding officer. And, O Josephine, if you are worth anything at all, do get out of him what that Edouard has settled."

Josephine kissed her, and promised to try. After the first salutation, there was a certain hesitation about Raynal which Josephine had never seen a trace of in him before; so, to put him at his ease, and at the same time keep her promise to Rose, she asked timidly if their mutual friend had been able to suggest anything.

"What! don't you know that I have been acting all along upon his instructions?" answered Raynal.

"No, indeed! and you have not told us what he advised."

"Told you? why, of course not; they were secret instructions. I have obeyed one set, and now I come to

the other; and there is the difficulty, being a kind of warfare I know nothing about."

"It must be savage warfare, then," suggested the lady politely.

"Not a bit of it. Now, who would have thought I was such a coward?"

Josephine was mystified; however, she made a shrewd guess. "Do you fear a repulse from any one of *us?* Then, I suppose, you meditate some extravagant act of generosity."

"Not I."

"Of delicacy, then."

"Just the reverse. Confound the young dog! why is he not here to help me?"

"But, after all," suggested Josephine, "you have only to carry out his instructions."

"That is true! that is true! but when a fellow is a coward, a poltroon, and all that sort of thing."

This repeated assertion of cowardice on the part of the living Damascus blade that stood bolt-upright before her, struck Josephine as so funny that she laughed merrily, and bade him fancy it was only a fort he was attacking instead of the terrible Josephine; whom none but heroes feared, she assured him.

This encouragement, uttered in jest, was taken in earnest. The soldier thanked her, and rallied visibly at the comparison. "All right," said he, "as you say, it is only a fort — so — mademoiselle!"

"Monsieur!"

"Hum! will you lend me your hand for a moment?"

"My hand! what for? there," and she put it out an inch a minute. He took it, and inspected it closely.

"A charming hand; the hand of a virtuous woman?"

"Yes," said Josephine as cool as a cucumber, too sublimely and absurdly innocent even to blush.

"Is it your own ? "

"Sir ! " She blushed at that, I can tell you.

"Because if it was, I would ask you to give it me. (I've fired the first shot anyway.) "

Josephine whipped her hand off his palm, where it lay like cream spilt on a trencher.

"Ah ! I see ; you are not free : you have a lover."

"No, no ! " cried Josephine in distress ; "I love nobody but my mother and sister : I never shall."

"Your mother," cried Raynal ; "that reminds me ; he told me to ask her ; by Jove, I think he told me to ask her first ; " and Raynal up with his scabbard and was making off.

Josephine begged him to do nothing of the kind.

"I can save you the trouble," said she.

"Ah, but my instructions ! my instructions ! " cried the military pedant, and ran off into the house, and left Josephine "planted there," as they say in France.

Raynal demanded a private interview of the baroness so significantly and unceremoniously that Rose had no alternative but to retire, but not without a glance of defiance at the bear. She ran straight, without her bonnet, into the Pleasaunce to slake her curiosity at Josephine. That young lady was walking pensively, but turned at sight of Rose, and the sisters came together with a clash of tongues.

"O Rose ! he has " —

"Oh ! "

So nimbly does the female mind run on its little beaten tracks, that it took no more than those syllables for even these innocent young women to communicate that Raynal had popped.

Josephine apologized for this weakness in a hero. "It wasn't his fault," said she. "It is your Edouard who set him to do it."

"My Edouard? Don't talk in that horrid way: I have no Edouard. You said 'no' of course."

"Something of the kind."

"What, did you not say 'no' plump?"

"I did not say it brutally, dear."

"Josephine, you frighten me. I know you can't say 'no' to any one; and if you don't say 'no' plump to such a man as this, you might as well say 'yes.'"

"Well, love," said Josephine, "you know our mother will relieve me of this; what a comfort to have a mother!"

They waited for Raynal's departure, to go to the baroness. They had to wait a long time. Moreover, when he did leave the château he came straight into the Pleasaunce. At sight of him Rose seized Josephine tight and bade her hold her tongue, as she could not say "no" plump to any one. Josephine was far from raising any objection to the arrangement.

"Monsieur," said Rose, before he could get a word out, "even if she had not declined, *I* could not consent."

Raynal tapped his forehead reflectively, and drew forth from memory that he had no instructions whatever to ask *her* consent.

She colored high, but returned to the charge.

"Is her own consent to be dispensed with too? She declined the honor, did she not?"

"Of course she did; but this was anticipated in my instructions. I am to be sure and not take the first two or three refusals."

"O Josephine, look at that insolent boy: he has found you out."

"Insolent boy!" cried Raynal; "why, it is the referee of your own choosing, and as well behaved a lad as ever I saw, and a zealous officer."

"My kind friends," put in Josephine with a sweet languor, "I cannot let you quarrel about a straw."

"It is not about a straw," said Raynal, "it is about you."

"The distinction involves a compliment, sir," said Josephine; then she turned to Rose, "Is it possible you do not see Monsieur Raynal's strange proposal in its true light? and you so shrewd in general. He has no personal feeling whatever in this eccentric proceeding: he wants to make us all happy, especially my mother, without seeming to lay us under too great an obligation. Surely good-nature was never carried so far before; ha, ha! Monsieur, I will encumber you with my friendship forever, if you permit me, but farther than that I will not abuse your generosity."

"Now look here, mademoiselle," began Raynal bluntly, "I did start with a good motive at first, that there's no denying. But, since I have been every day in your company, and seen how good and kind you are to all about you, I have turned selfish; and I say to myself, what a comfort such a wife as you would be to a soldier! Why, only to have you to write letters home to, would be worth half a fellow's pay. Do you know sometimes when I see the fellows writing their letters it gives me a knock here to think I have no one at all to write to."

Josephine sighed.

"So you see I am not so mighty disinterested. Now, mademoiselle, you speak so charmingly, I can't tell what you mean: can't tell whether you say 'no' because you could never like me, or whether it is out of delicacy, and you only want pressing. So I say no more at present: it is a standing offer. Take a day to consider. Take two if you like. *I* must go to the barracks; good-day."

"Oh! this must be put an end to at once," said Rose.

"With all my heart," replied Josephine; "but how?"

"Come to our mother, and settle that," said the impetuous sister, and nearly dragged the languid one into the drawing-room.

To their surprise they found the baroness walking up and down the room with unusual alacrity for a person of her years. She no sooner caught sight of Josephine than she threw her arms open to her with joyful vivacity, and kissed her warmly. "My love, you have saved us. I am a happy old woman. If I had all France to pick from I could not have found a man so worthy of my Josephine. He is brave, he is handsome, he is young, he is a rising man, he is a good son, and good sons make good husbands — and — I shall die at Beaurepaire, shall I not, Madame the Commandante?"

Josephine held her mother round the neck, but never spoke. After a silence she held her tighter, and cried a little.

"What is it?" asked the baroness confidentially of Rose, but without showing any very profound concern.

"Mamma! mamma! she does not love him."

"Love him? She would be no daughter of mine if she loved a man at sight. A modest woman loves her husband only."

"But she scarcely knows Monsieur Raynal."

"She knows more of him than I knew of your father when I married him. She knows his virtues and appreciates them. I have heard her, have I not, love? Esteem soon ripens into love when they are once fairly married."

"Mother, does her silence then tell you nothing? Her tears — are they nothing to you?"

"Silly child! These are tears that do not scald. The sweet soul weeps because she now for the first time sees she will have to leave her mother. Alas! my eldest, it

is inevitable. Mothers are not immortal. While they are here it is their duty to choose good husbands for their daughters. My youngest, I believe, has chosen for herself — like the nation. But for my eldest I choose. We shall see which chooses the best. Meantime we stay at Beaurepaire, thanks to my treasure here."

"Josephine! Josephine! you don't say one word," cried Rose in dismay.

"What *can* I say? I love my mother and I love you. You draw me different ways. I want you to be both happy."

"Then if you will not speak out I must. Mother, do not deceive yourself: it is duty alone that keeps her silent: this match is odious to her."

"Then we are ruined. Josephine, is this match odious to you?"

"Not exactly odious: but I am very, very indifferent."

"There!" cried Rose triumphantly.

"There!" cried the baroness in the same breath, triumphantly. "She esteems his character; but his person is indifferent to her: in other words, she is a modest girl, and my daughter; and let me tell you, Rose, that but for the misfortunes of our house, both my daughters would be married as I was, without knowing half as much of their husbands as Josephine knows of this brave, honest, generous, filial gentleman."

"Well, then, since she will not speak out, I will. Pity me: I love her so. If this stranger, whom she does not love, takes her away from us, he will kill me. I shall die; oh!"

Josephine left her mother and went to console Rose.

The baroness lost her temper at this last stroke of opposition. "Now the truth comes out, Rose; this is selfishness. Do not deceive *your*self — selfishness!"

"Mamma!"

"You are only waiting to leave me yourself. Yet your eldest sister, forsooth, must be kept here for you, — till then." She added more gently, "Let me advise you to retire to your own room, and examine your heart fairly. You will find there is a strong dash of egoism in all this."

"If I do" —

"You will retract your opposition."

"My heart won't let me; but I will despise myself, and be silent."

And the young lady, who had dried her eyes the moment she was accused of selfishness, walked, head erect, from the room. Josephine cast a deprecating glance at her mother. "Yes, my angel!" said the latter, "I was harsh. But we are no longer of one mind, and I suppose never shall be again."

"Oh, yes, we shall. Be patient! Mother — you shall not leave Beaurepaire."

The baroness colored faintly at these four last words of her daughter, and hung her head.

Josephine saw that, and darted to her and covered her with kisses.

That day the doctor scolded them both. "You have put your mother into a high fever," said he; "here's a pulse; I do wish you would be more considerate."

The commandant did not come to dinner as usual. The evening passed heavily; their hearts were full of uncertainty.

"We miss our merry, spirited companion," said the baroness with a grim look at Rose. Both young ladies assented with ludicrous eagerness.

That night Rose came and slept with Josephine, and more than once she awoke with a start and seized Josephine convulsively and held her tight.

Accused of egoism! at first her whole nature rose in

arms against the charge: but, after a while, coming as it did from so revered a person, it forced her to serious self-examination. The poor girl said to herself, "Mamma is a shrewd woman. Am I after all deceiving myself? Would she be happy, and am I standing in the way?" In the morning she begged her sister to walk with her in the park, so that they might be safe from interruption.

There, she said sadly, she could not understand her own sister. "Why are you so calm and cold, while I am in tortures of anxiety? Have you made some resolve and not confided it to your Rose?"

"No, love," was the reply; "I am scarce capable of a resolution; I am a mere thing that drifts."

"Let me put it in other words, then. How will this end?"

"I hardly know."

"Do you mean to marry Monsieur Raynal, then? answer me that."

"No; but I should not wonder if he were to marry *me*."

"But you said 'no.'"

"Yes, I said 'no' once."

"And don't you mean to say it again, and again, and again, till kingdom come?"

"What is the use? you heard him say he would not desist any the more, and I care too little about the matter to go on persisting, and persisting, and persisting."

"Why not, if he goes on pestering, and pestering, and pestering?"

"Ah, he is like you, all energy, at all hours; but I have so little where my heart is unconcerned: he seems, too, to have a wish! I have none either way, and my conscience says 'marry him!'"

"Your conscience say marry one man when you love another?"

"Heaven forbid! Rose, I love no one: I *have* loved; but now my heart is dead and silent; only my conscience says, 'You are the cause of all your mother's trouble; you are the cause that Beaurepaire was sold. Now you can repair that mischief, and at the same time make a brave man happy, our benefactor happy.' It is a great temptation: I hardly know why I said 'no' at all; surprise, perhaps — or to please you, pretty one."

Rose groaned: "Are you then worth so little that you would throw yourself away on a man who does not love you, nor want you, and is quite as happy single?"

"No; not happy; he is only stout-hearted and good, and therefore content; and he is a character that it would be easy — in short, I feel my power here: I could make that man happy; he has nobody to write to even, when he is away — poor fellow!"

"I shall lose all patience," cried Rose; "you are at your old trick, thinking of everybody but yourself: I let you do it in trifles, but I love you too well to permit it when the happiness of your whole life is at stake. I must be satisfied on one point, or else this marriage shall never take place: just answer me this; if Camille Dujardin stood on one side, and Monsieur Raynal on the other, and both asked your hand, which would you take?"

"That will never be. Whose? Not his whom I despise. Esteem might ripen into love, but what must contempt end in?"

This reply gave Rose great satisfaction. To exhaust all awkward contingencies, she said, "One question more, and I have done. Suppose Camille should turn out — be not quite — what shall I say — inexcusable?"

At this unlucky gush, Josephine turned pale, then red, then pale again, and cried eagerly, "Then all the world should not part us. Why torture me with such a ques-

tion? Ah! you have heard something." And in a moment the lava of passion burst wildly through its thin sheet of ice. "I was blind. This is why you would save me from this unnatural marriage. You are breaking the good news to me by degrees. There is no need. Quick — quick — let me have it. I have waited three years; I am sick of waiting. Why don't you speak? Why don't you tell me? Then I will tell *you*. He is alive — he is well — he is coming. It was not he those soldiers saw; they were so far off. How could they tell? They saw a uniform but not a face. Perhaps he has been a prisoner, and so could not write; could not come: but he is coming now. Why do you groan? why do you turn pale? ah! I see; I have once more deceived myself. I was mad. He I love is still a traitor to France and me, and I am wretched forever. Oh! that I were dead! oh! that I were dead! No; don't speak to me: never mind me; this madness will pass as it has before, and leave me a dead thing among the living. Ah! sister, why did you wake me from my dream? I was drifting so calmly, so peacefully, so dead, and painless, drifting over the dead sea of the heart towards the living waters of gratitude and duty. I was going to make more than one worthy soul happy; and seeing them happy, I should have been content and useful — what am I now? — and comforted other hearts, and died joyful — and young. For God is good; he releases the meek and patient from their burdens."

With this came a flood of tears; and she leaned against a bough with her forehead on her arm, bowed like a wounded lily.

"Accursed be that man's name, and *my* tongue if ever I utter it again in your hearing!" cried Rose, weeping bitterly. "You are wiser than I, and every way better. O my darling, dry your tears! Here he comes: look! riding across the park."

"Rose," cried Josephine, hastily, "I leave all to you. Receive Monsieur Raynal, and decline his offer if you think proper. It is you who love me best. My mother would give me up for a house; for an estate, poor dear."

"I would not give you for all the world."

"I know it. I trust all to you."

"Well, but don't go; stay and hear what I shall say."

"Oh, no; that poor man is intolerable to me *now*. Let me avoid his sight, and think of his virtues."

Rose was left alone, mistress of her sister's fate. She put her head into her hands and filled with anxiety and sudden doubt.

Like a good many more of us, she had been positive so long as the decision did not rest with her. But with power comes responsibility, with responsibility comes doubt. Easy to be an advocate *in re incertâ;* hard to be the judge. And she had but a few seconds to think in; for Raynal was at hand. The last thing in her mind before he joined her was the terrible power of that base Camille over her sister. She despaired of curing Josephine, but a husband might. There's such divinity doth hedge a husband in innocent girls' minds.

"Well, little lady," began Raynal, "and how are you, and how is my mother-in-law that is to be — or is not to be, as your sister pleases; and how is *she?* have I frightened her away? There were two petticoats, and now there is but one."

"She left me to answer you."

"All the worse for me: I am not to your taste."

"Do not say that," said Rose, almost hysterically.

"Oh! it is no sacrilege. Not one in fifty likes me."

"But I do like you, sir."

"Then why won't you let me have your sister?"

"I have not quite decided that you shall not have her," faltered poor Rose. She murmured on, "I dare

say you think me very unkind, very selfish; but put yourself in my place. I love my sister as no man can ever love her, I know: my heart has been one flesh and one soul with hers all my life. A stranger comes and takes her away from me as if she was I don't know what; his portmanteau; takes her to Egypt, oh! oh! oh!"

Raynal comforted her.

"What, do you think I am such a brute as to take that delicate creature about fighting with me? why, the hot sand would choke her, to begin. No. You don't take my manœuvre. I have no family; I try for a wife that will throw me in a mother and sister. You will live all together the same as before, of course; only you must let me make one of you when I am at home. And how often will that be? Besides, I am as likely to be knocked on the head in Egypt as not; you are worrying yourself for nothing, lit le lady."

He uttered the last topic of consolation in a broad, hearty, hilarious tone, like a trombone impregnated with cheerful views of fate.

"Heaven forbid!" cried Rose: "and i will, for even I shall pray for you now. What you will leave her at home? forgive me for not seeing all your worth: of course I knew you were an angel, but I had no idea you were a duck. You are just the man for my sister. She likes to obey: you are all for commanding. So you see. Then she never thinks of herself. any other man but you would impose on her good-nature; but you are too generous to do that. So you see. Then she esteems you so highly. And one whom I esteem (between you and me) has chosen you for her."

"Then say yes, and have done with it," suggested the straightforward soldier.

"Why should I say 'no?' you will make one another happy some day: you are both so good. Any other man

but you would tear her from me; but you are too just, too kind. Heaven will reward you. No! I will. I will give you Josephine: ah, my dear brother-in-law, it is the most precious thing I have to give in the world."

"Thank you, then. So that is settled. Hum! no, it is not quite; I forgot; I have something for you to read; an anonymous letter. I got it this morning; it says your sister has a lover."

The letter ran to this tune: a friend who had observed the commandant's frequent visits at Beaurepaire wrote to warn him against traps. Both the young ladies of Beaurepaire were doubtless at the new proprietor's service to pick and choose from. But for all that each of them had a lover, and though these lovers had their orders to keep out of the way till monsieur should be hooked, he might be sure that if he married either, the man of her heart would come on the scene soon after, perhaps be present at th wedding.

In short, it was one of those poisoned arrows a coarse vindictive coward can shoot.

It was the first anonymous letter Rose had ever seen. It almost drove her mad on the spot. Raynal was sorry he had let her see it.

She turned red and white by turns, and gasped for breath.

"Why am I not a man? — why don't I wear a sword? I would pass it through this caitiff's heart. The cowardly slave! — the fiend! for who but a fiend could slander an angel like my Josephine? Hooked? Oh! she will never marry you if she sees this."

"Then don't let her see it: and why take it to heart like that? I don't trust to the word of a man who owns that his story is a thing he dares not sign his name to; at all events, I shall not put his word against yours. But it is best to understand one another in time. I am a

plain man, but not a soft one. I should not be an easy-going husband like some I see about: I'd have no wasps round my honey; if my wife took a lover I would not lecture *the woman* — what is the use? — I'd kill *the man* then and there, in-doors or out, as I would kill a snake. If she took another, I'd send him after the first, and so on till one killed me."

"And serve the wretches right."

"Yes; but for my own sake I don't choose to marry a woman that loves any other man. So tell me the plain truth; come."

Rose turned chill in her inside. "I have no lover," she stammered. "I have a young fool that comes and teases me: but it is no secret. He is away, but why? he is on a sickbed, poor little fellow!"

"But your sister? She could not have a lover unknown to you."

"I defy her. No, sir; I have not seen her speak three words to any young man except Monsieur Riviere this three years past."

"That is enough;" and he tore the letter quietly to atoms.

Then Rose saw she could afford a little more candor. "Understand me; I can't speak of what happened when I was a child. But if ever she had a girlish attachment, he has not followed it up, or surely I should have seen something of him all these years."

"Of course. Oh! as for flirtations, let them pass: a lovely girl does not grow up without one or two whispering some nonsense into her ear. Why, I myself should have flirted no doubt; but I never had the time. Bonaparte gives you time to eat and drink, but not to sleep or flirt, and that reminds me I have fifty miles to ride, so good-by, sister-in-law, eh?"

"Adieu, brother-in-law."

Left alone, Rose had some misgivings. She had equivocated with one whose upright, candid nature ought to have protected him: but an enemy had accused Josephine; and it came so natural to shield her. "Did he really think I would expose my own sister?" said she to herself, angrily. Was not this anger secret self-discontent?

"Well, love," said Josephine, demurely, "have you dismissed him?"

"No."

Josephine smiled feebly. "It is easy to say 'say no;' but it is not so easy to say 'no,' especially when you feel you ought to say 'yes,' and have no wish either way except to give pleasure to others."

"But I am not such skim milk as all that," replied Rose: "I have always a strong wish where you are concerned, and your happiness. I hesitated whilst I was in doubt, but I doubt no longer: I have had a long talk with him. He has shown me his whole heart: he is the best, the noblest of creatures: he has no littleness or meanness. And then he is a thorough man; I know that by his being the very opposite of a woman in his ways. Now you are a thorough woman, and so you will suit one another to a T. I have decided: so no more doubts, love; no more tears; no more disputes. We are all of one mind, and I do think I have secured your happiness. It will not come in a day, perhaps, but it will come. So then in one little fortnight you marry Monsieur Raynal."

"What!" said Josephine, "you have actually settled that?"

"Yes."

"But are you sure I can make him as happy as he deserves?"

"Positive."

"I think so too; still" —

"It is settled, dear," said Rose soothingly.

"Oh, the comfort of that! you relieve me of a weight; you give me peace. I shall have duties; I shall do some good in the world. They were all for it but you before, were they not?"

"Yes, and now I am strongest for it of them all. Josephine, it is settled."

Josephine looked at her for a moment in silence, then said eagerly, "Bless you, dear Rose; you have saved your sister;" then, after a moment, in a very different voice, "O Camille! Camile! why have you deserted me?"

And with this she fell to sobbing terribly. Rose wept on her neck, but said nothing. She too was a woman, and felt that this was the last despairing cry of love giving up a hopeless struggle.

They sat twined together in silence till Jacintha came to tell them it was close upon dinner-time; so then they hastened to dry their tears and wash their red eyes, for fear their mother should see what they had been at, and worry herself.

"Well, mademoiselle, these two consent; but what do you say? for after all, it is you I am courting, and not them. Have you the courage to venture on a rough soldier like me?"

This delicate question was put point-blank before the three ladies.

"Sir," replied Josephine timidly, "I will be as frank, as straightforward as you are. I thank you for the honor you do me."

Raynal looked perplexed.

"And does that mean 'yes' or 'no'?"

"Which you please," said Josephine, hanging her sweet head.

The wedding was fixed for that day fortnight.

The next morning wardrobes were ransacked. The silk, muslin, and lace of their prosperous days were looked out: grave discussions were held over each work of art. Rose was active, busy, fussy. The baroness threw in the weight of her judgment and experience.

Josephine managed to smile whenever either Rose or the baroness looked at all fixedly at her.

So glided the peaceful days. So Josephine drifted towards the haven of wedlock.

CHAPTER VI.

At Bayonne, a garrison town on the south frontier of France, two sentinels walked lethargically, crossing and recrossing before the governor's house. Suddenly their official drowsiness burst into energy; for a pale, grisly man, in rusty, defaced, dirty, and torn regimentals, was walking into the courtyard as if it belonged to him. The sentinels lowered their muskets, and crossed them with a clash before the gateway.

The scarecrow did not start back. He stopped and looked down with a smile at the steel barrier the soldiers had improvised for him, then drew himself a little up, carried his hand carelessly to his cap, which was nearly in two, and gave the name of an officer in the French army.

If you or I, dressed like a beggar who years ago had stolen regimentals and worn them down to civil garments, had addressed these soldiers with these very same words, the bayonets would have kissed closer, or perhaps the points been turned against our sacred and rusty person: but there is a freemasonry of the sword. The light, imperious hand that touched that battered cap, and the quiet clear tone of command told. The sentinels slowly recovered their pieces, but still looked uneasy and doubtful in their minds. The battered one saw this, and gave a sort of lofty smile; he turned up his cuffs and showed his wrists, and drew himself still higher.

The sentinels shouldered their pieces sharp, then dropped them simultaneously with a clatter and ring upon the pavement.

"Pass, captain."

The rusty figure rang the governor's bell. A servant came and eyed him with horror and contempt. He gave his name, and begged to see the governor. The servant left him in the hall, and went up-stairs to tell his master. At the name the governor reflected, then frowned, then bade his servant reach him down a certain book. He inspected it. "I thought so: any one with him?"

"No, your excellency."

"Load my pistols, put them on the table, show him in, and then order a guard to the door."

The governor was a stern veteran with a powerful brow, a shaggy eyebrow, and a piercing eye. He never rose, but leaned his chin on his hand, and his elbow on a table that stood between them, and eyed his visitor very fixedly and strangely. "We did not expect to see you on this side the Pyrenees," said he gravely.

"Nor I myself, governor."

"What do you come for?"

"A suit of regimentals, and money to take me to Paris."

"And suppose, instead of that, I turn out a corporal's guard, and bid them shoot you in the courtyard?"

"It would be the drollest thing you ever did, all things considered," said the other coolly, but bitterly.

The governor looked for the book he had lately consulted, found the page, handed it to the rusty officer, and watched him keenly: the blood rushed all over his face, and his lip trembled; but his eye dwelt stern yet sorrowful on the governor.

"I have read your book, now read mine." He drew off his coat and showed his wrists and arms, blue and waled. "Can you read that, sir?"

"No."

"All the better for you: Spanish fetters, general."

He showed a white scar on his shoulder. "Can you read that? This is what I cut out of it," and he handed the governor a little round stone as big and almost as regular as a musket-ball.

"Humph! that could hardly have been fired from a French musket."

"Can you read this?" and he showed him a long cicatrix on his other arm.

"Knife I think," said the governor.

"You are right, sir: Spanish knife. Can you read this?" and opening his bosom he showed a raw wound on his breast.

"Oh, the devil!" cried the governor.

The wounded man put his rusty coat on again, and stood erect, and haughty, and silent.

The general eyed him, and saw his great spirit shining through this man. The more he looked the less could the scarecrow veil the hero from his practised eye. He said there must be some mistake, or else he was in his dotage; after a moment's hesitation, he added, "Be seated, if you please, and tell me what you have been doing all these years."

"Suffering."

"Not all the time, I suppose."

"Without intermission."

"But what? suffering what?"

"Cold, hunger, darkness, wounds, solitude, sickness, despair, prison, all that man can suffer."

"Impossible! a man would be dead at that rate before this."

"I should have died a dozen deaths but for one thing; I had promised her to live."

There was a pause. Then the old soldier said gravely, but more kindly, to the young one, "Tell me the facts, captain" (the first time he had acknowledged his visitor's military rank).

An hour had scarce elapsed since the rusty figure was stopped by the sentinels at the gate, when two glittering officers passed out under the same archway, followed by a servant carrying a furred cloak. The sentinels presented arms. The elder of these officers was the governor: the younger was the late scarecrow, in a brand-new uniform belonging to the governor's son. He shone out now in his true light; the beau ideal of a patrician soldier; one would have said he had been born with a sword by his side and drilled by nature, so straight and smart, yet easy he was in every movement. He was like a falcon, eye and all, only, as it were, down at the bottom of the hawk's eye lay a dove's eye. That compound and varying eye seemed to say, I can love, I can fight: I can fight, I can love, as few of you can do either.

The old man was trying to persuade him to stay at Bayonne, until his wound should be cured.

"No, general, I have other wounds to cure of longer standing than this one."

"Well, promise me to lay up at Paris."

"General, I shall stay an hour at Paris."

"An hour in Paris! Well, at least call at the War Office and present this letter."

That same afternoon, wrapped in the governor's furred cloak, the young officer lay at his full length in the *coupé* of the diligence, the whole of which the governor had peremptorily demanded for him, and rolled day and night towards Paris.

He reached it worn with fatigue and fevered by his wound, but his spirit as indomitable as ever. He went to the War Office with the governor's letter. It seemed to create some little sensation; one functionary came and said a polite word to him, then another. At last to his infinite surprise the minister himself sent down word he wished to see him; the minister put several questions

to him, and seemed interested in him and touched by his relation.

"I think, captain, I shall have to send to you: where do you stay in Paris?"

"Nowhere, monsieur; I leave Paris as soon as I can find an easy-going horse."

"But General Bretaux tells me you are wounded."

"Not dangerously."

"Pardon me, captain, but is this prudent? is it just to yourself and your friends?"

"Yes, I owe it to those who perhaps think me dead."

"You can write to them."

"I grudge so great, so sacred a joy to a letter. No! after all I have suffered I claim to be the one to tell her I have kept my word: I promised to live, and I live."

"*Her?* then I say no more, only tell me what road you take."

"The road to Brittany."

As the young officer was walking his horse by the roadside about a league and a half from Paris, he heard a clatter behind him, and up galloped an aide-de-camp and drew up alongside, bringing his horse nearly on his haunches.

He handed him a large packet sealed with the arms of France. The other tore it open; and there was his brevet as colonel. His cheek flushed and his eye glittered with joy. The aide-de-camp next gave him a parcel: "Your epaulets, colonel! We hear you are going into the wilds where epaulets don't grow. You are to join the army of the Rhine as soon as your wound is well."

"Wherever my country calls me."

"Your address, then, colonel, that we may know where to put our finger on a tried soldier when we want one."

"I am going to Beaurepaire."

"Beaurepaire? I never heard of it."

"You never heard of Beaurepaire? it is in Brittany, forty-five leagues from Paris, forty-three leagues and a half from here."

"Good! Health and honor to you, colonel."

"The same to you, lieutenant; or a soldier's death."

The new colonel read the precious document across his horse's mane, and then he was going to put one of the epaulets on his right shoulder, bare at present: but he reflected.

"No; she should make him a colonel with her own dear hand. He put them in his pocket. He would not even look at them till she had seen them. Oh, how happy he was not only to come back to her alive, but to come back to her honored."

His wound smarted, his limbs ached, but no pain past or present could lay hold of his mind. In his great joy he remembered past suffering and felt present pain — yet smiled. Only every now and then he pined for wings to shorten the weary road.

He was walking his horse quietly, drooping a little over his saddle, when another officer well mounted came after him and passed him at a hand gallop with one hasty glance at his uniform, and went tearing on like one riding for his life.

"Don't I know that face?" said Dujardin.

He cudgelled his memory, and at last he remembered it was the face of an old comrade. At least it strongly reminded him of one Jean Raynal who had saved his life in the Arno, when they were lieutenants together.

Yes, it was certainly Raynal, only bronzed by service in some hot country.

"Ah!" thought Camille; "I suppose I am more changed than he is; for he certainly did not recognize me at all. Now I wonder what that fellow has been

doing all this time. What a hurry he was in! a moment more and I should have hailed him. Perhaps I may fall in with him at the next town."

He touched his horse with the spur, and cantered gently on, for trotting shook him more than he could bear. Even when he cantered he had to press his hand against his bosom, and often with the motion a bitterer pang than usual came and forced the water from his eyes; and then he smiled. His great love and his high courage made this reply to the body's anguish. And still his eyes looked straight forward as at some object in the distant horizon, while he came gently on, his hand pressed to his bosom, his head drooping now and then, smiling patiently, upon the road to Beaurepaire.

Oh! if anybody had told him that in five days his Josephine was to be married; and that the bronzed comrade, who had just galloped past him, was to marry her!

At Beaurepaire they were making and altering wedding-dresses. Rose was excited, and even Josephine took a calm interest. Dress never goes for nothing with her sex. The chairs and tables were covered, and the floor was littered. The baroness was presiding over the rites of vanity, and telling them what she wore at her wedding, under Louis XV., with strict accuracy, and what we men should consider a wonderful effort of memory, when the Commandant Raynal came in like a cannon-ball, without any warning, and stood among them in a stiff military attitude. Exclamations from all the party, and then a kind greeting, especially from the baroness.

"We have been so dull without you, Jean."

"And I have missed you once or twice, mother-in-law, I can tell you. Well, I have got bad news; but you must consider we live in a busy time. To-morrow I start for Egypt."

Loud ejaculations from the baroness and Rose. Josephine put down her work quietly.

The baroness sighed deeply, and the tears came into her eyes. "Oh, you must not be down-hearted, old lady," shouted Raynal. "Why, I am as likely to come back from Egypt as not. It is an even chance, to say the least."

This piece of consolation completed the baroness's unhappiness. She really had conceived a great affection for Raynal, and her heart had been set on the wedding.

"Take away all that finery, girls," said she bitterly; "we shall not want it for years. I shall not be alive when he comes home from Egypt. I never had a son — only daughters — the best any woman ever had; but a mother is not complete without a son, and I shall never live to have one now."

"I hate General Bonaparte," said Rose viciously.

"Hate my general?" groaned Raynal, looking down with a sort of superstitious awe and wonder at the lovely vixen. "Hate the best soldier the world ever saw?"

"What do I care for his soldiership? He has put off our wedding. For how many years did you say?"

"No; he has put it on."

In answer to the astonished looks this excited, he explained that the wedding was to have been in a week, but now it must be to-morrow at ten o'clock.

The three ladies set up their throats together. "To-morrow?"

"To-morrow. Why, what do you suppose I left Paris for yesterday? left my duties even."

"What, monsieur?" asked Josephine, timidly, "did you ride all that way, and leave your duties *merely to marry me?*" and she looked a little pleased.

"You are worth a great deal more trouble than that,"

said Raynal simply. "Besides, I had passed my word, and I always keep my word."

"So do I," said Josephine, a little proudly. "I will not go from it now, if you insist; but I confess to you, that such a proposal staggers me; so sudden — no preliminaries — no time to reflect; in short, there are so many difficulties that I must request you to reconsider the matter."

"Difficulties," shouted Raynal with merry disdain; "there are none, unless you sit down and make them; we do more difficult things than this every day of our lives: we passed the bridge of Arcola in thirteen minutes; and we had not the consent of the enemy, as we have yours — have we not?"

Her only reply was a look at her mother, to which the baroness replied by a nod; then turning to Raynal, "This empressement is very flattering; but I see no possibility: there is an etiquette we cannot altogether defy: there are preliminaries before a daughter of Beaurepaire can become a wife."

"There used to be all that, madam," laughed Raynal, putting her down good-humoredly; "but it was in the days when armies came out and touched their caps to one another, and went back into winter quarters. Then the struggle was who could go slowest; now the fight is who can go fastest. Time and Bonaparte wait for nobody; and ladies and other strong places are taken by storm, not undermined a foot a month as under Noah Quartorze: let me cut this short, as time is short."

He then drew a little plan of a wedding campaign. "The carriages will be here at 9 A.M.," said he; "they will whisk us down to the mayor's house by a quarter to ten: Picard, the notary, meets us there with the marriage contract, to save time; the contract signed, the mayor will do the marriage at quick step out of respect for me

— half an hour — quarter past ten; breakfast in the same house an hour and a quarter: — we mustn't hurry a wedding breakfast — then ten minutes or so for the old fogies to waste in making speeches about our virtues — my watch will come out — my charger will come round — I rise from the table — embrace my dear old mother — kiss my wife's hand — into the saddle — canter to Paris — roll to Toulon — sail to Egypt. But I shall leave a wife and a mother behind me: they will both send me a kind word now and then; and I will write letters to you all from Egypt, and when I come home, my wife and I will make acquaintance, and we will all be happy together: and if I am killed out there, don't you go and fret your poor little hearts about it; it is a soldier's lot sooner or later. Besides, you will find I have taken care of you; nobody shall come and turn you out of your quarters, even though Jean Raynal should be dead; I have got to meet Picard at Riviere's on that very business — I am off."

He was gone as brusquely as he came.

"Mother! sister!" cried Josephine, "help me to love this man."

"You need no help," cried the baroness, with enthusiasm, "not love him, we should all be monsters."

Raynal came to supper looking bright and cheerful. "No more work to-day. I have nothing to do but talk; fancy that."

This evening Josephine de Beaurepaire, who had been silent and thoughtful, took a quiet opportunity, and purred in his ear, "Monsieur!"

"Mademoiselle!" rang the trombone.

"Am I not to go to Egypt?"

"No."

Josephine drew back at this brusque reply like a sensitive plant. But she returned to the attack.

"But is it not a wife's duty to be by her husband's side to look after his comfort — to console him when others vex him — to soothe him when he is harassed?"

"Her first duty is to obey him."

"Certainly."

"Well, when I am your husband, I shall bid you stay with your mother and sister while I go to Egypt."

"I shall obey you."

He told her bluntly he thought none the worse of her for making the offer; but should not accept it.

Camille Dujardin slept that night at a roadside inn about twelve miles from Beaurepaire, and not more than six from the town where the wedding was to take place next day.

It was a close race.

And the racers all unconscious of each other, yet spurred impartially by events that were now hurrying to a climax.

CHAPTER VII.

The next day at sharp nine two carriages were at the door.

But the ladies were not ready. Thus early in the campaign did they throw all into disorder. For so nicely had Raynal timed the several events that this threw him all into confusion. He stamped backwards and forwards, and twisted his mustaches, and swore. This enforced unpunctuality was a new torture to him. Jacintha told them he was angry, and that made them nervous and flurried, and their fingers strayed wildly among hooks and eyes, and all sorts of fastenings; they were not ready till half-past nine. Conscious they deserved a scolding, they sent Josephine down first to mollify. She dawned upon the honest soldier so radiant, so dazzling in her snowy dress, with her coronet of pearls (an heir-loom), and her bridal veil parted, and the flush of conscious beauty on her cheek, that instead of scolding her, he actually blurted out, "Well! by St. Denis it was worth waiting half an hour for."

He recovered a quarter of an hour by making the driver gallop. Then occasional shrieks issued from the carriage that held the baroness. That ancient lady feared annihilation: she had not come down from a galloping age.

They drove into the town, drew up at the mayor's house, were received with great ceremony by that functionary and Picard, and entered the house.

When their carriages rattled into the street from the north side, Colonel Dujardin had already entered it from

the south, and was riding at a foot's pace along the principal street. The motion of his horse now shook him past endurance. He dismounted at an inn a few doors from the mayor's house, and determined to do the rest of the short journey on foot. The landlord bustled about him obsequiously. "You are faint, colonel; you have travelled too far. Let me order you an excellent breakfast."

"No. I want a carriage; have you one?"

"I have two; but, unluckily, they are both engaged for the day, and by people of distinction. Commandant Raynal is married to-day."

"Ah! I wish him joy," said Camille, heartily. He then asked the landlord to open the window, as he felt rather faint. The landlord insisted on breakfast, and Camille sat down to an omelet and a bottle of red wine. Then he lay awhile near the window, revived by the air, and watched the dear little street he had not seen for years. He felt languid, but happy, celestially happy.

She was a few doors from him, and neither knew it.

A pen was put into her white hand, and in another moment she had signed a marriage contract.

"Now to the church," cried the baroness, gayly. To get to the church, they must pass by the window Camille reclined at.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh! there's no time for that," said Raynal. And as the baroness looked horrified and amazed, Picard explained: "The state marries its citizens now, with reason: since marriage is a civil contract."

"Marriage a civil contract!" repeated the baroness. "What, is it then no longer one of the holy sacraments? What horrible impiety shall we come to next? Unhappy France! Such a contract would never be a marriage in my eyes: and what would become of an union the Church had not blessed?"

"Madame," said Picard, "the Church can bless it still; but it is only the mayor here that can *do* it."

All this time Josephine was blushing scarlet, and looking this way and that, with a sort of instinctive desire to fly and hide, no matter where, for a week or so.

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared Raynal; "here is a pretty mother. Wants her daughter to be unlawfully married in a church, instead of lawfully in a house. Give me the will!"

"Look here, mother-in-law: I have left Beaurepaire to my lawful wife."

"Otherwise," put in Picard, "in case of death, it would pass to his heir-at-law."

"And *he* would turn you all out, and that does not suit me. Now there stands the only man who can make mademoiselle my *lawful* wife. So quick march, monsieur the mayor, for time and Bonaparte wait for no man."

"Stay a minute, young people," said the mayor.

"We should soothe respectable prejudices, not crush them. Madam, I am at least as old as you, and have seen many changes. I perfectly understand your feelings."

"Ah, monsieur! oh!"

"Calm yourself, dear madam; the case is not so bad as you think. It is perfectly true that in republican France the civil magistrate alone can bind French citizens in lawful wedlock. But this does not annihilate the religious ceremony. You can ask the Church's blessing on my work; and be assured you are not the only one who retains that natural prejudice. Out of every ten couples that I marry, four or five go to church afterwards and perform the ancient ceremonies. And they do well. For there before the altar the priest tells them what it is not my business to dilate upon — the grave moral and religious duties they have undertaken along with this civil contract. The state binds, but the Church still blesses, and piously assents to that" —

"From which she has no power to dissent."

"Monsieur Picard, do you consider it polite to interrupt the chief magistrate of the place while he is explaining the law to a citizen?"

(This closed Picard.)

"I married a daughter last year," continued the worthy mayor.

"What, after this fashion?"

"I married her myself, as I will marry yours, if you will trust me with her. And after I have made them one, there is nothing to prevent them adjourning to the church."

"I beg your pardon," cried Raynal, "there are two things to prevent it: a couple that wait for no man: Time and Bonaparte. Come, sir; marry us, and have done with it."

The mayor assented. He invited Josephine to stand

before him. She trembled and wept a little: Rose clung to her and wept, and the good mayor married the parties off hand.

"Is that all?" asked the baroness; "it is terribly soon done."

"It is done effectively, madam," said the mayor, with a smile. "Permit me to tell you that his Holiness the Pope cannot undo my work."

Picard grinned slyly, and whispered something into Raynal's ear.

"Oh! indeed," said Raynal aloud and carelessly. "Come, Madame Raynal, to breakfast: follow us, the rest of you."

They paired, and followed the bride and bridegroom into the breakfast-room.

The light words Picard whispered were five in number.

Now if the mayor had not snubbed Picard just before, he would have uttered those jocose but true words aloud. There was no particular reason why he should not. And if he had, — The threads of the web of life, how subtle they are! The finest cotton of Manchester, the finer meshes of the spider, seem three-inch cables by comparison with those moral gossamers which vulgar eyes cannot see at all, the "somethings, nothings," on which great fates have hung.

It was a cheerful breakfast, thanks to Raynal, who would be in high spirits, and would not allow a word of regret from any one. Madame Raynal sat by his side, looking up at him every now and then with innocent admiration. A merry wedding breakfast.

But if men and women could see through the walls of houses!

Two doors off sat the wounded colonel alone, recruiting the small remnant of his sore tried strength, that he

might struggle on to Beaurepaire, and lose in one moment years of separation, pain, prison, anguish, martyrdom, in one great gush of joy without compare.

The wedding breakfast was ended. The time was drawing near to part. There was a silence. It was broken by Madame Raynal. She asked Raynal very timidly if he had reflected. "On what?" said he.

"About taking me to Egypt."

"No: I have not given it a thought since I said 'no.'"

"Yet permit me to say that it is my duty to be by your side, my husband." And she colored at this word, being the first time she had ever used it. Raynal was silent. She murmured on, "I would not be an encumbrance to you, sir: I should not be useless. Gentlemen, I could add more to his comfort than he gives me credit for."

Warm assent of the mayor and notary to this hint.

"I give you credit for being an angel," said Raynal warmly.

He hesitated. Rose was trembling, her fork shaking in her poor little hand.

She cast a piteous glance at him. He saw it.

"You shall go with me next time," said he. "Let us speak of it no more."

Josephine bowed her head. "At least give me something to do for you while you are away. Tell me what I can do for my absent friend to show my gratitude, my regard, my esteem."

"Well, let me think. I saw a plain gray dress at Beaurepaire."

"Yes, monsieur. My gray silk, Rose."

"I like that dress."

"Do you? Then the moment I reach home after los

ing you I shall put it on, and it shall be my constant wear. I see; you are right; gray becomes a wife whose husband is not dead, but is absent, and alas! in hourly danger."

"Now look at that!" cried Raynal to the company. "That is her all over: she can see six meanings where another would see but one. I never thought of that, I swear. I like modest colors, that is all. My mother used to be all for modest wives wearing modest colors."

"I am of her mind, sir. Is there nothing more difficult you will be so good as give me to do?"

"No; there is only one order more, and that will be easier still to such a woman as you. I commit to your care the name of Raynal. It is not so high a name as yours, but it is as honest. I am proud of it: I am jealous of it. I shall guard it for you in Egypt: you guard it in France for me."

"With my life," cried Josephine, lifting her eyes and her hand to heaven.

Soon after this Raynal ordered his charger.

The baroness began to cry. "The young people may hope to see you again," said she; "but there are two chances against your poor old mother."

"Courage, mother!" cried the stout soldier. "No, no; you won't play me such a trick: once is enough for that game."

"Brother!" cried Rose, "do not go without kissing your little sister, who loves you and thanks you." He kissed her. "Brave, generous soul!" she cried, with her arms round his neck. "God protect you, and send you back safe to us!"

"Amen!" cried all present by one impulse, even the cold notary.

Raynal's mustache quivered. He kissed Josephine hastily on the brow, the baroness on both cheeks; shook

the men's hands warmly but hastily, and strode out without looking behind him. He was moved for once.

They all followed him to the door of the house. He was tightening his horse's girths. He flung himself with all the resolution of his steel nature into the saddle, and, with one grand wave of his cocked hat to the tearful group, he spurred away for Egypt.

CHAPTER IX.

THE baroness took the doctor a-shopping; she must buy Rose a gray silk. In doing this she saw many other tempting things. I say no more.

But the young ladies went up to Beaurepaire in the other carriage, for Josephine wished to avoid the gaze of the town, and get home and be quiet. The driver went very fast. He had drunk the bride's health at the mayor's, item the bridegroom's, the bridesmaid's, the mayor's, etc., and "a spur in the head is worth two in the heel," says the proverb. The sisters leaned back on the soft cushions, and enjoyed the smooth and rapid motion once so familiar to them, so rare of late.

Then Rose took her sister gently to task for having offered to go to Egypt. She had forgotten her poor sister.

"No, love," replied Josephine, "did you not see I dared not look towards you? I love you better than all the world; but this was my duty. I was his wife: I had no longer a feeble inclination and a feeble disinclination to decide between, but right on one side, wrong on the other."

"Oh! I know where your ladyship's strength lies: my force is — in — my inclinations."

"Yes, Rose," continued Josephine thoughtfully, "duty is a great comfort: it is so tangible; it is something to lay hold of for life or death; a strong tower for the weak but well disposed."

Rose assented, and they were silent a minute; and when she spoke again it was to own she loved a carriage.

"How fast we glide! Now lean back with me, and take my hand, and as we glide shut your eyes and think: whisper me all your feelings, every one of them."

"Well, then," said Josephine, half closing her eyes, "in the first place I feel a great calm, a heavenly calm. My fate is decided. No more suspense. My duties are clear. I have a husband I am proud of. There is no perfidy with him, no deceit, no disingenuousness, no shade. He is a human sun. He will make me a better, truer woman, and I him a happier man. Yes, is it not nice to think that great and strong as he is I can teach him a happiness he knows not as yet?" And she smiled with the sense of her delicate power, but said no more; for she was not the one to talk much about herself. But Rose pressed her. "Yes, go on, dear," she said, "I seem to see your pretty little thoughts rising out of your heart like a bubbling fountain: go on."

Thus encouraged, Josephine thought on aloud, "And then, gratitude!" said she. "I have heard it said, or read it somewhere, that gratitude is a burden: I cannot understand that sentiment; why, to me gratitude is a delight, gratitude is a passion. It is the warmest of all the tender feelings I have for dear Monsieur Raynal. I feel it glow here, in my bosom. I think I shall love him as I ought long before he comes back."

"*Before?*"

"Yes," murmured Josephine, her eyes still half closed. "His virtues will always be present to me. His little faults of manner will not be in sight. Good Raynal! The image of those great qualities I revere so, perhaps because I fail in them myself, will be before my mind; and ere he comes home I shall love him dearly. I'll tell you one reason why I wished to go home at once was — no — you must guess."

"Guess?" said Rose, contemptuously. "As if I did not see it was to put on your gray silk."

Josephine smiled assent, and said almost with fervor, "Good Raynal! I feel prouder of his honest name than of our noble one. And I am so calm, dear, thanks to you, so tranquil; so pleased that my mother's mind is at rest, so convinced all is for the best, so contented with my own lot; so hap—py."

A gentle tear stole from beneath her long lashes. Rose looked at her wistfully: then laid her cheek to hers. They leaned back hand in hand, placid and silent.

The carriage glided fast. Beaurepaire was almost in sight.

Suddenly Josephine's hand tightened on Rose's, and she sat up in the carriage like a person awakened from a strange dream.

"What is it?" asked Rose.

"Some one in uniform."

"Oh, is that all? Ah! you thought it was a message from Raynal."

"Oh! no! on foot — walking very slowly. Coming this way, too. Coming this way!" and she became singularly restless, and looked round in the carriage. It was one of those old chariots with no side windows, but a peep hole at the back. This aperture, however, had a flap over it. Josephine undid the flap with nimble though agitated fingers; and saw — nothing. The road had taken a turn. "Oh," said Rose, carelessly, "for that matter the roads are full of soldiers just now."

"Ay, but not of officers on foot."

Rose gave her such a look, and for the first time this many a day spoke sternly to her, and asked her what on earth she had to do with uniforms or officers except one, the noblest in the world, her husband.

A month ago that word was almost indifferent to Josephine, or rather she uttered it with a sort of mild complacency. Now she started at it, and it struck chill

upon her. She did not reply, however, and the carriage rolled on.

"He seemed to be dragging himself along." This was the first word Josephine had spoken for some time. "Oh, did he?" replied Rose carelessly; "well, let him. Here we are, at home."

"I am glad of it," said Josephine, "very glad."

On reaching Beaurepaire she wanted to go up-stairs at once and put on her gray gown. But the day was so delightful that Rose begged her to stroll in the Pleasaunce for half an hour and watch for their mother's return. She consented in an absent way, and presently began to walk very fast, unconscious of her companion. Rose laid a hand upon her playfully to moderate her, and found her skin burning.

"Why, what is the matter?" said she, anxiously.

"Nothing, nothing," was the sharp reply.

"There's a fretful tone; and how excited you look, and feel too. Well, I thought you were unnaturally calm after such an event."

"I only saw his back," said Josephine. "Did not you see him?"

"See who? Oh, that tiresome officer. Why, how much more are we to hear about him? I don't believe there *was* one."

At this moment a cocked hat came in sight, bobbing up and down above the palings that divided the park from the road. Josephine pointed to it without a word.

Rose got a little cross at being practically confuted, and said coldly, "Come, let us go in; the only cocked hat we can see is on the way to Paris."

Josephine assented eagerly. But she had not taken two steps towards the house ere she altered her mind, and said she felt faint, she wanted air; no, she should stay out a little longer. "Look, Rose," said she, in a

strangely excited way, "what a shame! They put all manner of rubbish into this dear old tree: I will have it all turned out." And she looked with feigned interest into the tree: but her eyes seemed turned inward.

Rose gave a cry of surprise. "He is waving his hat to me! What on earth does that mean?"

"Perhaps he takes you for me," said Josephine.

"Who is it? What do you mean?"

"*It is he!* I knew his figure at a glance." And she blushed and trembled with joy; she darted behind the tree and peered round at him unseen: turning round a moment she found Rose at her back pale and stern. She looked at her, and said with terrible simplicity, "Ah, Rose, I forgot."

"Are you mad, Josephine? Into the house this moment; if it *is* he, I will receive him and send him about his business."

But Josephine stood fascinated, and pale as ashes; for now the cocked hat stopped, and a pale face with eyes whose eager fire shone even at that distance, rose above the palings. Josephine crouched behind Rose, and gasped out, "Something terrible is coming, terrible! terrible!"

"Say something hateful," said Rose, trembling in her turn, but only with anger. "The heartless selfish traitor! He never notices you till you are married to the noblest of mankind; and then he comes here directly to ruin your peace. No; I have altered my mind. He shall not see you, of course; but *you* shall hear *him*. I'll soon make you know the wretch and loathe him as I do. There, now he has turned the corner; hide in the oak while he is out of sight. Hide, quick, quick." Josephine obeyed mechanically; and presently, through that very aperture whence her sister had smiled on her lover she hissed out, in a tone of which one would not have

thought her capable, "Be wise, be shrewd; find out who is the woman that has seduced him from me, and has brought two wretches to this. I tell you it is some wicked woman's doing. He loved me once."

"Not so loud!—one word: you are a wife. Swear to me you will not let him see you, come what may."

"Oh! never! never!" cried Josephine with terror. "I would rather die. When you have heard what he has to say, then tell him I am dead. No, tell him I adore my husband, and went to Egypt this day with him. Ah! would to God I had!"

"Sh! sh!"

"Sh!"

Camille was at the little gate.

Rose stood still, and nerved herself in silence. Josephine panted in her hiding-place.

Rose's only thought now was to expose the traitor to her sister, and restore her peace. She pretended not to see Camille till he was near her. He came eagerly towards her, his pale face flushing with great joy, and his eyes like diamonds.

"Josephine! It is not Josephine, after all," said he. "Why, this must be Rose, little Rose, grown up to a fine lady, a beautiful lady."

"What do you come here for, sir?" asked Rose in a tone of icy indifference.

"What do I come here for? is that the way to speak to me? but I am too happy to mind. Dear Beaurepaire! do I see you once again!"

"And madame?"

"What madame?"

"Madame Dujardin that is or was to be."

"This is the first I have ever heard of her," said Camille, gayly.

"This is odd, for we have heard all about it."

"Are you jesting?"

"No."

"If I understand you right, you imply that I have broken faith with Josephine?"

"Certainly."

"Then you lie, Mademoiselle Rose de Beaurepaire."

"Insolent!"

"No. It is you who have insulted your sister as well as me. She was not made to be deserted for meaner women. Come, mademoiselle, affront me, and me alone, and you shall find me more patient. Oh! who would have thought Beaurepaire would receive me thus?"

"It is your own fault. You never sent her a line for all these years."

"Why, how could I?"

"Well, sir, the information you did not supply others did. We know that you were seen in a Spanish village drinking between two guerillas."

"That is true," said Camille.

"An honest French soldier fired at you. Why, he told us so himself."

"He told you true," said Camille, sullenly. "The bullet grazed my hand; see, here is the mark. Look!" She did look, and gave a little scream; but recovering herself, said she wished it had gone through his heart. "Why prolong this painful interview?" said she; "the soldier told us all."

"I doubt that," said Camille. "Did he tell you that under the table I was chained tight down to the chair I sat in? Did he tell you that my hand was fastened to a drinking-horn, and my elbow to the table, and two fellows sitting opposite me with pistols quietly covering me, ready to draw the trigger if I should utter a cry? Did he tell you that I would have uttered that cry and died at that table but for one thing, I had promised her to live?"

"Not he; he told me nothing so incredible. Besides, what became of you all these years? You are a double traitor, to your country and to her."

Camille literally gasped for breath. "You are a most cruel young lady to insult me so," said he, and scalding tears forced themselves from his eyes.

Rose eyed him with merciless scorn.

He fought manfully against this weakness, with which his wound and his fatigue had something to do, as well as Rose's bitter words; and after a gallant struggle he returned her her haughty stare, and addressed her thus: "Mademoiselle, I feel myself blush, but it is for you I blush, not for myself. This is what *became* of me. I went out alone to explore; I fell into an ambuscade; I shot one of the enemy, and pinked another, but my arm being broken by a bullet, and my horse killed under me, the rascals got me. They took me about, tried to make a decoy of me as I have told you, and ended by throwing me into a dungeon. They loaded me with chains, too, though the walls were ten feet thick, and the door iron, and bolted and double-bolted outside. And there for months and years, in spite of wounds, hunger, thirst, and all the tortures those cowards made me suffer, I lived, because, Rose, I had promised some one at that gate there (and he turned suddenly and pointed to it) that I would come back alive. At last, one night, my jailer came to my cell drunk. I seized him by the throat and throttled him till he was insensible; his keys unlocked my fetters, and locked him in the cell, and I got safely outside. But there a sentinel saw me, and fired at me. He missed me but ran after me, and caught me. You see I was stiff, confined so long. He gave me a thrust of his bayonet; I flung my heavy keys fiercely in his face; he staggered; I wrested his piece from him, and disabled him."

"Ah!"

"I crossed the frontier in the night, and got to Bayonne; and thence, day and night, to Paris. There I met a reward for all my anguish. They gave me the epaulets of a colonel. See, here they are. France does not give these to traitors, young lady." He held them out to her in both hands. She eyed them half stupidly; all her thoughts were on the oak-tree hard by. She began to shudder. Camille was telling the truth. She felt that; she saw it; and Josephine was hearing it. "Ay! look at them, you naughty girl," said Camille, trying to be jocose over it all with his poor trembling lip. He went on to say that from the moment he had left dark Spain, and entered fair France everybody was so kind, so sympathizing. "They felt for the poor worn soldier coming back to his love. All but you, Rose. You told me I was a traitor to her and to France."

"I was told so," said Rose, faintly. She was almost at her wits' end what to say or do.

"Well, are you sorry or not sorry for saying such a cruel thing to a poor fellow?"

"Sorry, very sorry," whispered Rose. She could not persist in injustice, yet she did not want Josephine to hear.

"Then say no more about it; there's my hand. You are not a soldier, and did not know what you were talking about."

"I am very sorry I spoke so harshly to you. But you understand. How you look; how you pant. There, I will show you I forgive you. These epaulets, dear, I have never put them on. I said, no; Josephine shall put them on for me. I will take honor as well as happiness from her dear hand. But you are her sister, and what are epaulets compared with what she will give me? You shall put them on, dear. Come, then you will be sure I bear no malice."

ROSE . . . FASTENED ON THE EPAULETS.

Rose, faint at heart, consented in silence, and fastened on the epaulets. "Yes, Camille!" she cried, with sudden terror, "think of glory, now; nothing but glory."

"No one thinks of it more. But to-day how can I think of it, how can I give her a rival? To-day I am all love. Rose, no man ever loved a human creature as I love Josephine. Your mother is well, dear? All are well at Beaurepaire? Oh, where is she all this time? in the house?" He was moving quickly towards the house; but Rose instinctively put out her hand to stop him. He recoiled a little and winced.

"What is the matter?" cried she.

"Nothing, dear girl; you put your hand on my wound, that is all. What is that noise in the tree? Anybody listening to us?"

"I'll see," said Rose, with all a woman's wit, and whipped hastily round to hinder Camille from going. She found Josephine white as death, apparently fainting, and clutching at the tree convulsively with her nails. Such was the intensity of the situation that she left her beloved sister in that piteous state, and even hoped she would faint dead away, and so hear no more. She came back white, and told Camille it was only a bird got into the tree. "And to think you should be wounded," said she, to divert his attention from the tree.

"Yes," said he, "and it is rather inflamed, and has worried me all the way. You need not go telling Josephine, though. They wanted me to stop and lay up at Bayonne. How could I? And again at Paris. How could I? They said, 'You will die.' — 'Not before I get to Beaurepaire,' said I. I could bear the motion of a horse no longer, so at the nearest town I asked for a carriage. Would you believe it? both his carriages were *out at a wedding.* I could not wait till they came back. I had waited an eternity. I came on foot. I dragged my-

self along; the body was weak, but the heart was strong. A little way from here my wound seemed inclined to open. I pressed it together tight with my hand; you see I could not afford to lose any more blood, and so struggled on. 'Die?' said I, 'not before Beaurepaire.' And, O Rose! now I could be content to die — at her feet; for I am happy. Oh! I am happy beyond words to utter. What I have gone through! But I kept my word, and this is Beaurepaire. Hurrah!" and his pale cheek flushed, and his eye gleamed, and he waved his hat feebly over his head, "hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

"Oh, don't! — don't! — don't!" cried Rose wild with pity and dismay.

"How can I help? — I am mad with joy — hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

"No! no! no! no! no!"

"What is the matter?"

"And must I stab you worse than all your enemies have stabbed you?" sighed Rose, and tears of womanly pity now streamed down her cheeks.

Camille's mind began to misgive him. What was become of Josephine? she did not appear. He faltered out, "Your mother is well; all are well I hope. Oh, where is she?" and receiving no reply, began to tremble visibly with the fear of some terrible calamity.

Rose, with a sister fainting close by, and this poor lover trembling before her, lost all self-command, and began to wring her hands and cry wildly. "Camille," she almost screamed, "there is but one thing for you to do; leave Beaurepaire on the instant: fly from it; it is no place for you."

"She is dead," said Camille, very quietly.

When he said that, with an unnatural and monotonous calm such as precedes deliberate suicide, it flashed in one moment across Rose that it was much best he should think so.

She did not reply; but she drooped her head and let him think it.

"She would have come to me ere this if she was alive," said he. "You are all in white: they mourn in white for angels like her, that go to heaven, virgins. Oh! I was blind. You might have told me at once; you see I can bear it. What does it matter to one who loves as I love? It is only to give her one more proof I lived only for her. I would have died a hundred times but for my promise to her. Yes, I am coming, love; I am coming."

He fell on his knees and smiled, and whispered, "I am coming, Josephine, I am coming."

A sob and a moan as of a creature dying in anguish answered him.

Rose screamed with terror when she heard it.

Camille rose to his feet, awestruck. "That was her voice, behind this tree," he whispered.

"No, no," cried Rose; "it was me."

But at that moment a rustle and a rush was heard of some one darting out of the tree.

Camille darted furiously round it in the same direction. Rose tried to stop him, but was too late. The next moment Raynal's wife was in his arms.

CHAPTER X.

JOSEPHINE wrestled long and terribly with nature in that old oak-tree. But who can so struggle forever? Anguish, remorse, horror, despair, and love wrenched her to and fro; and O mysterious human heart! gleams of a mad fitful joy shot through her, coming quick as lightning, going as quickly, and leaving the despair darker. And then the fierce struggle of the soul to make itself heard! More than once she had to close her mouth with her hand: more than once she seized her throat not to cry out. But as the struggle endured, she got weaker and weaker, and nature mightier and mightier. And when the wounded hero fell on his knees so close to her; when he who had resisted death so bravely for her, prepared to give up life calmly for her, her bosom rose beyond all control: it seemed to fill to choking, then to split wide open and give the struggling soul passage in one gasping sob and heart-stricken cry. Could she have pent this in she must have died.

It betrayed her. She felt it had: so then came the woman's instinct — flight: the coward's impulse — flight: the chaste wife's inspiration — flight. She rushed from her hiding-place and made wildly for the house.

But, unluckily, Camille was at that moment darting round the tree: she ran right into the danger she meant to flee. He caught her in his arms. He held her irresistibly. "I have got her; I have got her," he shouted in wild triumph. "No! I will not let you go. None but God shall ever take you from me, and he has spared you to me. You are not dead: you have kept faith as I have:

you have lived. See! look at me. I am alive, I am well, I am happy. I told Rose that I suffered. If I had suffered I should remember it. It is all gone at sight of you, my love! my love! Oh, my Josephine! my love!"

His arm was firm round her waist. His glowing eyes poured love upon her. She felt his beating heart.

All that passed in her then, what mortal can say? She seemed two women: that part of her which could not get away from his strong arm lost all strength to resist, it yielded and thrilled under his embrace, her bosom heaving madly: all that was free writhed away from him; her face was averted with a glare of terror, and both her hands put up between his eyes and it.

"You turn away your head. Rose, she turns away. Speak for me. Scold her; for I don't know how to scold her. No answer from either; oh, what has turned your hearts against me so?"

"Camille," cried Rose — the tears streaming down her cheeks — "my poor Camille! leave Beaurepaire. Oh, leave it at once."

He turned towards her with a look of inquiry.

At that Josephine, like some feeble but nimble wild creature on whom a grasp has relaxed, writhed away from him and got free: "Farewell! Farewell!" she cried, in despair's own voice, and made swiftly for the house.

Camille stood aghast, and did not follow her.

Now ere she had gone many steps who should meet her right in front but Jacintha.

"Madame Raynal, the baroness's carriage is just in sight. I thought you'd like to know." Then she bawled proudly to Rose, "I was the first to call her madame;" and off went Jacintha convinced she had done something very clever.

This blow turned those three to stone.

Josephine had no longer the power or the wish to fly. "Better so," she thought, and she stood cowering.

The great passions that had spoken so loud were struck dumb, and a deep silence fell upon the place. Madame Raynal's quivering eye turned slowly and askant towards Camille, but stopped in terror ere it could see him. For she knew by this fearful stillness that the truth was creeping on Camille. And so did Rose.

At last Camille spoke one word in a low whisper.

"Madame?"

Dead silence.

"White? both in white?"

Rose came between him and Josephine, and sobbed out, "Camille, it was our doing. We drove her to it. O sir, look how afraid of you she is. Do not reproach her, if you are a man."

He waved her out of his way as if she had been some idle feather, and almost staggered up to Josephine.

"It is for you to speak, my betrothed: are you married?"

The poor creature, true to her nature, was thinking more of him than herself. Even in her despair it flashed across her, "If he knew all, he too would be wretched for life. If I let him think ill of me he may be happy one day." She cowered the picture of sorrow and tongue-tied guilt.

"Are you a wife?"

"Yes."

He winced and quivered as if a bullet had pierced him.

"This is how I came to be suspected; she I loved was false."

"Yes, Camille."

"No, no!" cried Rose; "don't believe *her:* she never suspected you. We have brought her to this, we alone."

"Be silent, Rose! oh, be silent!" gasped Josephine.

"I lived for you: I would have died for you; you could not even wait for me."

A low moan, but not a word of excuse.

"What can I do for you now?"

"Forget me, Camille," said she despairingly, doggedly.

"Forget you? never, never! there is but one thing I can do to show you how I loved you: I will forgive you, and begone. Whither shall I go? whither shall I go now?"

"Camile, your words stab her."

"Let none speak but I," said Camille; "none but I have the right to speak. Poor weak angel that loved yet could not wait: I forgive you. Be happy, if you can; I bid you be hap-py."

The quiet, despairing tones died away, and with them life seemed to end to her, and hope to go out. He turned his back quickly on her. He cried hoarsely, "To the army! Back to the army, and a soldier's grave!" Then with a prodigious effort he drew himself haughtily up in marching attitude. He took three strides, erect and fiery and bold.

At the next something seemed to snap asunder in the great heart, and the worn body that heart had held up so long, rolled like a dead log upon the ground with a tremendous fall.

CHAPTER XI.

The baroness and Aubertin were just getting out of their carriage, when suddenly they heard shrieks of terror in the Pleasaunce. They came with quaking hearts as fast as their old limbs would carry them. They found Rose and Josephine crouched over the body of a man, an officer.

Rose was just tearing open his collar and jacket. Dard and Jacintha had run from the kitchen at the screams. Camille lay on his back, white and motionless.

The doctor was the first to come up. "Who! what is this? I seem to know his face." Then shaking his head, "Whoever it is, it is a bad case. Stand away, ladies. Let me feel his pulse."

Whilst the old man was going stiffly down on one knee, Jacintha uttered a cry of terror. "See, see! his shirt! that red streak! Ah, ah! it is getting bigger and bigger:" and she turned faint in a moment, and would have fallen but for Dard.

The doctor looked. "All the better," said he firmly. "I thought he was dead. His blood flows; then I will save him. Don't clutch me so, Josephine; don't cling to me like that. Now is the time to show your breed: not turn sick at the sight of a little blood, like that foolish creature, but help me save him."

"Take him in-doors," cried the baroness.

"Into our house, mamma?" gasped Rose; "no, no."

"What," said the baroness, "a wounded soldier who has fought for France! leave him to lie and die outside

my door: what would my son say to that? He is a soldier himself."

Rose cast a hasty look at Josephine. Josephine's eyes were bent on the ground, and her hands clenched and trembling.

"Now, Jacintha, you be off," said the doctor. "I can't have cowards about him to make the others as bad. Go and stew down a piece of good beef for him. Stew it in red wine and water."

"That I will: poor thing!"

"Why, I know him," said the baroness suddenly; "it is an old acquaintance, young Dujardin: you remember, Josephine. I used to suspect him of a fancy for you, poor fellow! Why, he must have come here to see us, poor soul."

"No matter who it is; it is a man. Now, girls, have you courage, have you humanity? Then come one on each side of him and take hands beneath his back, while I lift his head and Dard his legs."

"And handle him gently whatever you do," said Dard. "I know what it is to be wounded."

These four carried the lifeless burden very slowly and gently across the Pleasaunce to the house, then with more difficulty and caution up the stairs.

All the while the sisters' hands griped one another tight beneath the lifeless burden, and spoke to one another. And Josephine's arm upheld tenderly but not weakly the hero she had struck down. She avoided Rose's eye, her mother's, and even the doctor's: one gasping sob escaped her as she walked with head half averted, and vacant, terror-stricken eyes, and her victim on her sustaining arm.

The doctor selected the tapestried chamber for him as being most airy. Then he ordered the women out, and with Dard's help undressed the still insensible patient.

Josephine sat down on the stairs in gloomy silence, her eyes on the ground, like one waiting for her death-blow.

Rose, sick at heart, sat silent too at some distance. At last she said faintly, "Have we done well?"

"I don't know," said Josephine doggedly. Her eyes never left the ground.

"We could not let him die for want of care."

"He will not thank us. Better for him to die than live. Better for me."

At this instant Dard came running down. "Good news, mesdemoiselles, good news! the wound runs all along; it is not deep, like mine was. He has opened his eyes and shut them again. The dear good doctor stopped the blood in a twinkle. The doctor says he'll be bound to save him. I must run and tell Jacintha. She is taking on in the kitchen."

Josephine, who had risen eagerly from her despairing posture, clasped her hands together, then lifted up her voice and wept. "He will live! he will live!"

When she had wept a long while, she said to Rose, "Come, sister, help your poor Josephine."

"Yes, love, what shall we do?"

"My duty," faltered Josephine. "An hour ago it seemed so sweet," and she fell to weeping patiently again. They went to Josephine's room. She crept slowly to a wardrobe, and took out a gray silk dress.

"Oh, never mind for to-day," cried Rose.

"Help me, Rose. It is for myself as well; to remind me every moment I am Madame Raynal."

They put the gray gown on her, both weeping patiently. It will be known at the last day, all that honest women have suffered weeping silently in this noisy world.

Camille soon recovered his senses and a portion of his

strength: then the irritation of his wound brought on fever. This in turn retired before the doctor's remedies and a sound constitution, but it left behind it a great weakness and general prostration. And in this state the fate of the body depends greatly on the mind.

The baroness and the doctor went constantly to see him, and soothe him: he smiled and thanked them, but his eager eyes watched the door for one who came not.

When he got well enough to leave his bed the largest couch was sent up to him from the saloon; a kind hand lined the baron's silk dressing-gown for him warm and soft and nice; and he would sit or lie on his couch, or take two turns in the room leaning upon Rose's shoulder, and glad of the support; and he looked piteously in her eyes when she came and when she went. Rose looked down; she could do nothing, she could say nothing.

With his strength, Camille lost a portion of his pride: he pined for a sight of her he no longer respected; pined for her, as the thirsty pine for water in Sahara.

At last one day he spoke out. "How kind you are to me, Rose! how kind you all are — but one."

He waited in hopes she would say something, but she held her tongue.

"At least tell me why it is. Is she ashamed? Is she afraid?"

"Neither."

"She hates me: it is true, then, that we hate those whom we have wounded. Cruel, cruel Josephine! Oh, heart of marble against which my heart has wrecked itself forever!"

"No, no! She is anything but cruel: but she is Madame Raynal."

"Ah! I forgot. But have I no claim on her? Nearly four years she has been my betrothed. What have I done? Was I ever false to her? I could forgive her

for what she has done to me, but she cannot forgive me. Does she mean never to see me again?"

"Ask yourself what good could come of it."

"Very well," said Camille, with a malicious smile. "I am in her way. I see what she wants; she shall have it."

Rose carried these words to Josephine. They went through her like a sword.

Rose pitied her. Rose had a moment's weakness.

"Let us go to him," she said; "anything is better than this."

"Rose, I dare not," was the wise reply.

But the next day early, Josephine took Rose to a door outside the house, a door that had long been disused. Nettles grew before it. She produced a key and with great difficulty opened this door. It led to the tapestried chamber, and years ago they used to steal up it and peep into the room.

Rose scarcely needed to be told that she was to watch Camille, and report to her. In truth, it was a mysterious, vague protection against a danger equally mysterious. Yet it made Josephine easier. But so unflinching was her prudence that she never once could be prevailed on to mount those stairs, and peep at Camille herself. "I must starve my heart, not feed it," said she. And she grew paler and more hollow-eyed day by day.

Yet this was the same woman who showed such feebleness and irresolution when Raynal pressed her to marry him. But then dwarfs feebly drew her this way and that. Now giants fought for her. Between a feeble inclination and a feeble disinclination her dead heart had drifted to and fro. Now honor, duty, gratitude, — which last with her was a passion, — dragged her one way: love, pity, and remorse another.

Not one of these giants would relax his grasp, and

nothing yielded except her vital powers. Yes; her temper, one of the loveliest Heaven ever gave a human creature, was soured at times.

Was it a wonder? There lay the man she loved pining for her; cursing her for her cruelty, and alternately praying Heaven to forgive him and to bless her: sighing, at intervals, all the day long, so loud, so deep, so piteously, as if his heart broke with each sigh; and sometimes, for he little knew, poor soul, that any human eye was upon him, casting aside his manhood in his despair, and flinging himself on the very floor, and muffling his head, and sobbing; he a hero.

And here was she pining in secret for him who pined for her? "I am not a woman at all," said she, who was all woman. "I am crueller to him than a tiger or any savage creature is to the victim she tears. I must cure him of his love for me; and then die; for what shall I have to live for? He weeps, he sighs, he cries for Josephine."

Her enforced cruelty was more contrary to this woman's nature than black is to white, or heat to cold, and the heart rebelled furiously at times. As when a rock tries to stem a current, the water fights its way on more sides than one, so insulted nature dealt with Josephine. Not only did her body pine, but her nerves were exasperated. Sudden twitches came over her, that almost made her scream. Her permanent state was utter despondency, but across it came fitful flashes of irritation; and then she was scarce mistress of herself.

Wherefore you, who find some holy woman cross and bitter, stop a moment before you sum her up vixen and her religion naught: inquire the history of her heart: perhaps beneath the smooth cold surface of duties well discharged, her life has been, or even is, a battle against some self-indulgence the insignificant saint's very blood

cries out for: and so the poor thing is cross, not because she is bad, but because she is better than the rest of us; yet only human.

Now though Josephine was more on her guard with the baroness than with Rose, or the doctor, or Jacintha, her state could not altogether escape the vigilance of a mother's eye.

But the baroness had not the clew we have; and what a difference that makes! How small an understanding, put by accident or instruction on the right track, shall run the game down! How great a sagacity shall wander if it gets on a false scent!

"Doctor," said the baroness one day, "you are so taken up with your patient you neglect the rest of us. Do look at Josephine! She is ill, or going to be ill. She is so pale, and so fretful, so peevish, which is not in her nature. Would you believe it, doctor, she snaps?"

"Our Josephine snap? This is new."

"And snarls."

"Then look for the end of the world."

"The other day I heard her snap Rose: and this morning she half snarled at me, just because I pressed her to go and console our patient. Hush! here she is. My child, I am accusing you to the doctor. I tell him you neglect his patient: never go near him."

"I will visit him one of these days," said Josephine, coldly.

"One of these days," said the baroness, shocked. "You used not to be so hard-hearted. A soldier, an old comrade of your husband's, wounded and sick, and you alone never go to him, to console him with a word of sympathy or encouragement."

Josephine looked at her mother with a sort of incredulous stare. Then, after a struggle, she replied with a tone and manner so spiteful and icy that it would have

deceived even us who know her had we heard it. "He has plenty of nurses without me." She added, almost violently, "My husband, if he were wounded, would not have so many, perhaps not have one."

With this she rose and went out, leaving them aghast. She sat down in the passage on a window-seat, and laughed hysterically. Rose heard her and ran to her. Josephine told her what her mother had said to her. Rose soothed her. "Never mind, you have your sister who understands you: don't you go back till they have got some other topic."

Rose out of curiosity went in, and found a discussion going on. The doctor was fathoming Josephine, for the benefit of his companion.

"It is a female jealousy, and of a mighty innocent kind. We are so taken up with this poor fellow, she thinks her soldier is forgotten."

"Surely, doctor, our Josephine would not be so unreasonable, so unjust," suggested her mother.

"She belongs to a sex, be it said without offending you, madame, among whose numberless virtues justice does not fill a prominent place."

The baroness shook her head. "That is not it. It is a piece of prudery. This young gentleman was a sort of admirer of hers, though she did not admire him much, as far as I remember. But it was four years ago; and she is married to a man she loves, or is going to love."

"Well, but, mamma, a trifling excess of delicacy is surely excusable." This from Rose.

"No, no; it is not delicacy; it is prudery. And when people are sick and suffering, an honest woman should take up her charity and lay down her prudery, or her coquetry: two things that I suspect are the same thing in different shapes."

Here Jacintha came in. "Mademoiselle, here is the

colonel's broth; Madame Raynal has flavored it for him, and you are to take it up to him, and keep him company while he eats it."

"Come," cried the baroness, "my lecture has not been lost."

Rose followed Jacintha up-stairs.

Rose was heart and head on Raynal's side.

She had deceived him about Josephine's attachment, and felt all the more desirous to guard him against any ill consequences of it. Then he had been so generous to her: he had left her her sister, who would have gone to Egypt, and escaped this misery, but for her.

But on the other hand,

— Gentle pity
Tugged at her heartstrings with complaining cries.

This watching of Camille saddened even her. When she was with him his pride bore him up: but when he was alone as he thought, his anguish and despair were terrible, and broke out in so many ways that often Rose shrank in terror from her peep hole.

She dared not tell Josephine the half of what she saw: what she did tell her agitated her so terribly: and often Rose had it on the tip of her tongue to say, "Do pray go and see if you can say nothing that will do him good;" but she fought the impulse down. This battle of feeling, though less severe than her sister's, was constant; it destroyed her gayety. She, whose merry laugh used to ring like chimes through the house, never laughed now, seldom smiled, and often sighed.

Dr. Aubertin was the last to succumb to the deep depression, but his time came: and he had been for a day or two as grave and as sad as the rest, when one day that Rose was absent, spying on Camille, he took the baroness and Josephine into his confidence; and condescended finally to ask their advice.

"It is humiliating," said he, "after all my experience, to be obliged to consult unprofessional persons. Forty years ago I should have been *too wise* to do so. But since then I have often seen science baffled and untrained intelligences throw light upon hard questions: and your sex in particular has luminous instincts and reads things by flashes that we men miss with a microscope. Our dear Madame Raynal suspected that plausible notary, and to this day I believe she could not tell us why."

Josephine admitted as much very frankly.

"There you see," said the doctor. "Well, then, you must help me in this case. And this time I promise to treat your art with more respect."

"And pray who is it she is to read now?" asked the baroness.

"Who should it be but my poor patient? He puzzles me. I never knew a patient so faint-hearted."

"A soldier faint-hearted!" exclaimed the baroness. "To be sure these men that storm cities, and fire cannon, and cut and hack one another with so much spirit, are poor creatures compared with us when they have to lie quiet and suffer."

The doctor walked the room in great excitement. "It is not his wound that is killing him, there's something on his mind. You, Josephine, with your instincts do help me: do pray, for pity's sake, throw off that sublime indifference you have manifested all along to this man's fate."

"She has not," cried the baroness, firing up. "Did I not see her lining his dressing-gown for him? and she inspects everything that he eats: do you not?"

"Yes, mother." She then suggested in a faltering voice that time would cure the patient, and time alone.

"Time! you speak as if time was a quality: time is only a measure of events, favorable or unfavorable; it kills as many as it cures."

"Why, you surely would not imply his life is in any danger?" This was the baroness.

"Madame, if the case was not grave, should I take this unusual step? I tell you if some change does not take place soon, he will be a dead man in another fortnight. That is all *time* will do for him."

The baroness uttered an exclamation of pity and distress. Josephine put her hand to her bosom, and a creeping horror came over her, and then a faintness. She sat working mechanically, and turning like ice within. After a few minutes of this, she rose with every appearance of external composure and left the room. In the passage she met Rose coming hastily towards the *salon* laughing: the first time she had laughed this many a day. Oh, what a contrast between the two faces that met there — the one pale and horror-stricken, the other rosy and laughing!

"Well, dear, at last I am paid for all my trouble, and yours, by a discovery; he never drinks a drop of his medicine; he pours it into the ashes under the grate; I caught him in the fact."

"Then this is too much: I can resist no longer. Come with me," said Josephine doggedly.

"Where?"

"To him."

CHAPTER XII.

Josephine paused on the landing, and laid her hand on Rose's shoulder. It was so cold it made Rose shudder, and exacted a promise from her not to contradict a word she should say to Camille. "I do not go to him for my pleasure, but for his life," she said; "I must deceive him and save him; and then let me lie down and die."

"Oh, that the wretch had never been born!" cried Rose, in despair. But she gave the required promise, and offered to go and tell Camille Josephine was coming to visit him.

But Josephine declined this. "No," said she; "give me every advantage; I must think beforehand every word I shall say; but take him by surprise, coward and doubleface that I am."

Rose knocked at the door. A faint voice said, "Come in." The sisters entered the room very softly. Camille sat on the sofa, his head bowed over his hands. A glance showed Josephine that he was doggedly and resolutely thrusting himself into the grave. Thinking it was only Rose — for he had now lost all hope of seeing Josephine come in at the door — he never moved. Some one glided gently but rapidly up to him. He looked up. Josephine was kneeling to him.

He lifted his head with a start, and trembled all over.

She whispered, "I am come to you to beg your pity; to appeal to your generosity; to ask a favor; I who deserve so little of you."

"You have waited a long time," said Camille, agitated greatly; "and so have I."

"Camille, you are torturing one who loved you once, and who has been very weak and faithless, but not so wicked as she appears."

"How am I torturing you?"

"With remorse; do I not suffer enough? Would you make me a murderess?"

"Why have you never been near me?" retorted Camille. "I could forgive your weakness, but not your heartlessness."

"It is my duty. I have no right to seek your society. If you really want mine, you have only to get well, and so join us down-stairs a week or two before you leave us."

"How am I to get well? My heart is broken."

"Camille, be a man. Do not fling away a soldier's life because a fickle, worthless woman could not wait for you. Forgive me like a man, or else revenge yourself like a man. If you cannot forgive me, kill me. See, I kneel at your feet. I will not resist you. Kill me."

"I wish I could. Oh! if I could kill you with a look and myself with a wish! No man should ever take you from me, then. We would be together in the grave at this hour. Do not tempt me, I say;" and he cast a terrible look of love, and hatred, and despair upon her. Her purple eye never winced; it poured back tenderness and affection in return. He saw and turned away with a groan, and held out his hand to her. She seized it and kissed it. "You are great, you are generous; you will not strike me as a woman strikes; you will not die to drive me to despair."

"I see," said he, more gently, "love is gone, but pity remains. I thought that was gone, too."

"Yes, Camille," said Josephine, in a whisper, "pity remains, and remorse and terror at what I have done to a man of whom I was never worthy."

"Well, madame, as you have come at last to me, and

even do me the honor to ask me a favor — I shall try — if only out of courtesy — to — ah, Josephine ! Josephine ! when did I ever refuse you anything ? "

At this Josephine sank into a chair, and burst out crying. Camille, at this, began to cry too; and the two poor things sat a long way from one another, and sobbed bitterly.

The man, weakened as he was, recovered his quiet despair first.

"Don't cry so," said he. "But tell me what is your will, and I shall obey you as I used before any one came between us."

"Then, live, Camille. I implore you to live."

"Well, Josephine, since you care about it, I will try and live. Why did not you come before and ask me ? I thought I was in your way. I thought you wanted me dead."

Josephine cast a look of wonder and anguish on Camille, but she said nothing. She rang the bell, and, on Jacintha coming up, despatched her to Dr. Aubertin for the patient's medicine.

"Tell the doctor," said she, "Colonel Dujardin has let fall the glass." While Jacintha was gone, she scolded Camille gently. "How could you be so unkind to the poor doctor who loves you so? Only think: to throw away his medicines ! Look at the ashes; they are wet. Camille, are you, too, becoming disingenuous ? "

Jacintha came in with the tonic in a glass, and retired with an obeisance. Josephine took it to Camille.

"Drink with me, then," said he, "or I will not touch it." Josephine took the glass. "I drink to your health, Camille, and to your glory; laurels to your brow, and some faithful woman to your heart, who will make you forget this folly: it is for her I am saving you." She put the glass with well-acted spirit to her lips; but in

the very action a spasm seized her throat and almost choked her; she lowered her head that he might not see her face, and tried again; but the tears burst from her eyes and ran into the liquid, and her lips trembled over the brim, and were paralyzed.

"No, no! give it me!" he cried; "there is a tear of yours in it." He drank off the bitter remedy now as if it had been nectar.

Josephine blushed.

"If you wanted me to live, why did you not come here before?"

"I did not think you would be so foolish, so wicked, so cruel as to do what you have been doing."

"Come and shine upon me every day, and you shall have no fresh cause of complaint; things flourish in the sunshine that die in the dark: Rose, it is as if the sun had come into my prison; you are pale, but you are beautiful as ever — more beautiful; what a sweet dress! so quiet, so modest, it sets off your beauty instead of vainly trying to vie with it." With this he put out his hand and took her gray silk dress, and went to kiss it as a devotee kisses the altar steps.

She snatched it away with a shudder.

"Yes, you are right," said she; "thank you for noticing my dress; it is a beautiful dress — ha! ha! A dress I take a pride in wearing, and always shall, I hope. I mean to be buried in it. Come, Rose. Thank you, Camille; you are very good, you have once more promised me to live. Get well; come down-stairs; then you will see me every day, you know — there is a temptation. Good-by, Camille! — are you coming, Rose? What are you loitering for? God bless you, and comfort you, and help you to forget what it is madness to remember!"

With these wild words she literally fled; and in one moment the room seemed to darken to Camille.

Outside the door Josephine caught hold of Rose. "Have I committed myself?"

"Over and over again. Do not look so terrified; I mean to me, but not to him. How blind he is! and how much better you must know him than I do to venture on such a transparent deceit. He believes whatever you tell him. He is all ears and no eyes. Yes, love, I watched him keenly all the time. He really thinks it is pity and remorse, nothing more. My poor sister, you have a hard life to lead, a hard game to play; but so far you have succeeded; yet could look poor Raynal in the face if he came home to-day."

"Then God be thanked!" cried Josephine. "I am as happy to-day as I can ever hope to be. Now let us go through the farce of dressing — it is near dinner-time — and then the farce of talking, and, hardest of all, the farce of living."

From that hour Camille began to get better very slowly, yet perceptibly.

The doctor, afraid of being mistaken, said nothing for some days, but at last he announced the good news at the dinner-table. "He is to come down-stairs in three days," added the doctor.

But I am sorry to say that as Camille's body strengthened some of the worst passions in our nature attacked him. Fierce gusts of hate and love combined overpowered this man's high sentiments of honor and justice, and made him clench his teeth, and vow never to leave Beaurepaire without Josephine. She had been his four years before she ever saw this interloper, and she should be his forever. Her love would soon revive when they should meet every day, and she would end by eloping with him.

Then conscience pricked him, and reminded him how and why Raynal had married her: for Rose had told him

all. Should he undermine an absent soldier, whose whole conduct in this had been so pure, so generous, so unselfish?

But this was not all. As I have already hinted, he was under a great personal obligation to his quondam comrade Raynal. Whenever this was vividly present to his mind, a great terror fell on him, and he would cry out in anguish, "Oh! that some angel would come to me and tear me by force from this place!" And the next moment passion swept over him like a flood, and carried away all his virtuous resolves. His soul was in deep waters; great waves drove it to and fro. Perilous condition, which seldom ends well. Camille was a man of honor. In no other earthly circumstance could he have hesitated an instant between right and wrong. But such natures, proof against all other temptations, have often fallen, and will fall, where sin takes the angel form of her they love. Yet, of all men, they should pray for help to stand; for when they fall they still retain one thing that divides them from mean sinners.

Remorse, the giant that rends the great hearts which mock at fear.

The day came in which the doctor had promised his patient he should come down-stairs. First his comfortable sofa was taken down into the saloon for his use: then the patient himself came down leaning on the doctor's arm, and his heart palpitating at the thought of the meeting. He came into the room; the baroness was alone. She greeted him kindly, and welcomed him. Rose came in soon after and did the same. But no Josephine. Camille felt sick at heart. At last dinner was announced; "She will surely join us at dinner," thought he. He cast his eyes anxiously on the table; the napkins were laid for four only. The baroness carelessly explained

this to him as they sat down. "Madame Raynal dines in her own room. I am sorry to say she is indisposed."

Camille muttered polite regrets: the rage of disappointment drove its fangs into him, and then came the heart-sickness of hope deferred. The next day he saw her, but could not get a word with her alone. The baroness tortured him another way. She was full of Raynal. She loved him. She called him her son; was never weary of descanting on his virtues to Camille. Not a day passed that she did not pester Camille to make a calculation as to the probable period of his return, and he was obliged to answer her. She related to him before Josephine and Rose, how this honest soldier had come to them like a guardian angel and saved the whole family. In vain he muttered that Rose had told him.

"Let me have the pleasure of telling it you my way," cried she, and told it diffusely, and kept him writhing.

The next thing was, Josephine had received no letter from him this month; the first month he had missed. In vain did Rose represent that he was only a few days over his time. The baroness became anxious, communicated her anxieties to Camille among the rest; and, by a torturing interrogatory, compelled him to explain to her before Josephine and them all, that ships do not always sail to a day, and are sometimes delayed. But oh! he winced at the man's name; and Rose observed that he never mentioned it, nor acknowledged the existence of such a person as Josephine's husband, except when others compelled him. Yet they were acquainted; and Rose sometimes wondered that he did not detract or sneer.

"I should," said she; "I feel I should."

"He is too noble," said Josephine, "and too wise. For, if he did, I should respect him less, and my husband more than I do — if possible."

Certainly Camille was not the sort of nature that detracts, but the reason he avoided Raynal's name was simply that his whole internal battle was to forget such a man existed. From this dream he was rudely awakened every hour since he joined the family, and the wound his self-deceiving heart would fain have skinned over, was torn open. But worse than this was the torture of being tantalized. He was in company with Josephine, but never alone. Even if she left the room for an instant, Rose accompanied her and returned with her. Camille at last began to comprehend that Josephine had decided there should be no private interviews between her and him. Thus, not only the shadow of the absent Raynal stood between them, but her mother and sister in person, and worst of all, her own will. He called her a cold-blooded fiend in his rage. Then the thought of all her tenderness and goodness came to rebuke him. But even in rebuking it maddened him. "Yes, it is her very nature to love; but since she can make her heart turn whichever way her honor bids, she will love her husband; she does not now; but sooner or later she will. Then she will have children — (he writhed with anguish and fury at this thought) — loving ties between him and her. He has everything on his side. I, nothing but memories she will efface from her heart. Will efface? She must have effaced them, or she could not have married him." I know no more pitiable state of mind than to love and hate the same creature. But when the two feelings are both intense, and meet in an ardent bosom, such a man would do well to spend a day or two upon his knees, praying for grace divine. For he who with all his soul loves and hates one woman is next door to a maniac, and is scarcely safe an hour together from suicide or even from homicide; this truth the newspapers tell us, by examples, every month; but are wonderfully

little heeded, because newspapers do not, nor is it their business to, analyze and dwell upon the internal feelings of the despairing lover, whose mad and bloody act they record. With such a tempest in his heart did Camille one day wander into the park. And soon an irresistible attraction drew him to the side of the stream that flowed along one side of it. He eyed it gloomily, and wherever the stagnant water indicated a deeper pool than usual he stopped, and looked, and thought, "How calm and peaceful you are!"

He sat down at last by the water-side, his eyes bent on a calm, green pool.

It looked very peaceful; and it could give peace. He thought, oh! what a blessing ; to be quit of rage, jealousy, despair, and life, all in a minute!

Yet that was a sordid death for a soldier to die, who had seen great battles. Could he not die more nobly than that? With this he suddenly felt in his pocket; and there sure enough fate had placed his pistols. He had put them into this coat; and he had not worn this coat until to-day. He had armed himself unconsciously. "Ah!" said he; "it is to be; all these things are pre-ordained." (This notion of fate has strengthened many a fatal resolution.) Then he had a cruel regret. To die without a word; a parting word. Then he thought to himself, it was best so ; for perhaps he should have taken her with him.

"Sir! colonel!" uttered a solemn voice behind him.

Absorbed and strung up to desperation as he was, this voice seemed unnaturally loud, and discordant with Camille's mood; a sudden trumpet from the world of small things.

It was Picard, the notary.

"Can you tell me where Madame Raynal is?"

"No. At the château, I suppose."

"She is not there; I inquired of the servant. She was out. You have not seen her, colonel?"

"Not I; I never see her."

"Then perhaps I had better go back to the château and wait for her: stay, are you a friend of the family? Colonel, suppose I were to tell you, and ask you to break it to Madame Raynal, or, better still, to the baroness, or Mademoiselle Rose."

"Monsieur," said Camille coldly, "charge me with no messages, for I cannot deliver them. *I am going another way.*"

"In that case, I will go to the château once more; for what I have to say must be heard."

Picard returned to the château wondering at the colonel's strange manner.

Camille, for his part, wondered that any one could be so mad as to talk to him about trifles; to him, a man standing on the brink of eternity. Poor soul, it was he who was mad and unlucky. He should have heard what Picard had to say. The very gentleness and solemnity of manner ought to have excited his curiosity.

He watched Picard's retiring form. When he was out of sight, then he turned round and resumed his thoughts as if Picard had been no more than a fly that had buzzed and then gone.

"Yes, I should have taken her with me," he said. He sat gloomy and dogged like a dangerous maniac in his cell; never moved, scarce thought for more than half an hour; but his deadly purpose grew in him. Suddenly he started. A lady was at the style, about a hundred yards distant. He trembled. It was Josephine.

She came towards him slowly, her eyes bent on the ground in a deep reverie. She stopped about a stone's throw from him, and looked at the river long and thoughtfully; then casting her eye around, she caught

sight of Camille. He watched her grimly. He saw her give a little start, and half turn round; but if this was an impulse to retreat, it was instantly suppressed; for the next moment she pursued her way.

Camille stood gloomy and bitter, awaiting her in silence. He planted himself in the middle of the path, and said not a word.

She looked him all over, and her color came and went.

"Out so far as this," she said kindly; "and without your cap."

He put his hand to his head, and discovered that he was bareheaded.

"You will catch your death of cold. Come, let us go in and get your cap."

She made as if she would pass him. He planted himself right before her.

"No."

"Camille!"

"Why do you shun me as if I was a viper?"

"I do not shun you. I but avoid conferences that can lead to no good; it is my duty."

"You are very wise; cold-hearted people can be wise."

"Am I cold-hearted, Camille?"

"As marble."

She looked him in the face; the water came into her eyes; after awhile she whispered, sorrowfully, "Well, Camille, I am."

"But with all your wisdom and all your coldness," he went on to say, "you have made a mistake; you have driven me to madness and despair."

"Heaven forbid!" said she.

"Your prayer comes too late; you have done it."

"Camille, let me go to the oratory, and pray for you. You terrify me."

"It is no use. Heaven has no mercy for me. Take

my advice; stay where you are; don't hurry; for what remains of your life you gave to pass with me, do you understand that?"

"Ah!" And she turned pale.

"Can you read my riddle?"

She looked him in the face. "I can read your eyes, and I know you love me. I think you mean to kill me. I have heard men kill the thing they love."

"Of course they do; sooner than another should have it, they kill it — they kill it."

"God has not made them patient like us women. Poor Camille!"

"Patience dies when hope dies. Come, Madame Raynal, say a prayer, for you are going to die."

"God bless you, Camille!" said the poor girl, putting her hands together in her last prayer. At this sweet touch of affection, Camille hung his head, and sobbed. Then suddenly lashing himself into fury, he cried, —

"You are my betrothed! you talk of duty; but you forget your duty to me. Are you not my betrothed this four years? Answer me that."

"Yes, Camille, I was."

"Did I not suffer death a hundred times for you, to keep faith with you, you cold-blooded traitress with an angel's face?"

"Ah, Camille! can you speak so bitterly to me? Have I denied your right to kill me? You shall never dishonor me, but you shall kill me, if it is your pleasure. I do not resist. Why, then, speak to me like that; must the last words I hear from your mouth be words of anger, cruel Camille?"

"I was wrong. But it is so hard to kill her I love in cold blood. I want anger as well as despair to keep me to it. Come, turn your head away from me, and all our troubles shall end."

"No, Camille, let me look at you. Then you will be the last thing I shall see on earth."

At this he hesitated a moment; then, with a fierce stamp at what he thought was weakness, he levelled a pistol at her.

She put up her hands with a piteous cry, "Oh! not my face, Camille! pray do not disfigure my face. Here — kill me here — in my bosom — my heart that loved you well, when it was no sin to love you."

"I can't shoot you. I can't spill your blood. The river will end all, and not disfigure your beauty, that has driven me mad, and cost you, poor wretch, your life."

"Thank you, dear Camille. The water does not frighten me as a pistol does; it will not hurt me; it will only kill me."

"No, it is but a plunge, and you will be at peace forever; and so shall I. Come, take my hand, Madame Raynal, Madame Raynal."

She gave him her hand with a look of infinite love. She only said, "My poor mother!" That word did not fall to the ground. It flashed like lightning at night across the demented lover, and lighted up his egotism (suicide, like homicide, is generally a fit of maniacal egotism), even to his eyes blinded by fury.

"Wretch that I am," he shrieked. "Fly, Josephine, fly! escape this moment, that my better angel whispers to me. Do you hear? begone, while it is time."

"I will not leave you, Camille."

"I say you shall. Go to your mother and Rose; go to those you love, and I can pity; go to the chapel and thank Heaven for your escape."

"Yes, but not without you, Camille. I am afraid to leave you."

"You have more to fear if you stay. Well, I can't wait any longer. Stay, then, and live; and learn from me how to love Jean Raynal."

He levelled the pistol at himself.

Josephine threw herself on him with a cry, and seized his arm. With the strength excitement lent her she got the better, and all but overpowered him. But, as usual, the man's strength lasted longer, and with a sustained effort he threw her off; then, pale and panting, raised the pistol to take his life. This time she moved neither hand nor foot; but she palsied his rash hand with a word.

"No; I LOVE YOU."

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE lie the dead corpses of those words on paper; but my art is powerless to tell you how they were uttered, those words, potent as a king's, for they saved a life.

They were a cry of terror and a cry of reproach and a cry of love unfathomable.

The weapon shook in his hand. He looked at her with growing astonishment and joy; she at him fixedly and anxiously, her hands clasped in supplication.

"As you used to love me?"

"More, far more. Give me the pistol. I love you, dearest. I love you."

At these delicious words he lost all power of resistance, she saw; and her soft and supple hand stole in and closed upon his, and gently withdrew the weapon, and threw it into the water. "Good Camille! now give me the other."

"How do you know there is another?"

"I know you are not the man to kill a woman and spare yourself. Come."

"Josephine, have pity on me, do not deceive me; pray do not take this, my only friend, from me, unless you really love me."

"I love you; I adore you," was her reply.

She leaned her head on his shoulder, but with her hand she sought his, and even as she uttered those loving words she coaxed the weapon from his now unresisting grasp.

"There, it is gone; you are saved from death — saved from crime." And with that, the danger was over, she

trembled for the first time, and fell to sobbing hysterically.

He threw himself at her knees, and embraced them again and again, and begged her forgiveness in a transport of remorse and self-reproach.

She looked down with tender pity on him, and heard his cries of penitence and shame.

"Rise, Camille, and go home with me," said she faintly.

"Yes, Josephine."

They went slowly and in silence. Camille was too ashamed and penitent to speak; too full of terror too at the abyss of crime from which he had been saved. The ancients feigned that a virgin could subdue a lion; perhaps they meant that a pure gentle nature can subdue a nature fierce but generous. Lion-like Camille walked by Josephine's side with his eyes bent on the ground, the picture of humility and penitence.

"This is the last walk you and I shall take together," said Josephine solemnly.

"I know it," said he humbly. "I have forfeited all right to be by your side."

"My poor, lost love," sighed Josephine, "will you never understand me? You never stood higher in my esteem than at this moment. It is the avowal you have forced from *me* that parts us. The man to whom I have said 'I'— must not remain beneath my husband's roof. Does not your sense of honor agree with mine?"

"It does," faltered he.

"To-morrow you must leave the château."

"I will obey you."

"What, you do not resist, you do not break my heart by complaints, by reproaches?"

"No, Josephine, all is changed. I thought you unfeeling: I thought you were going to be *happy* with him; that was what maddened me."

"I pray daily *you* may be happy, no matter how. But you and I are not alike, dear as we are to one another. Well, do not fear: I shall never be happy — will that soothe you, Camille?"

"Yes, Josephine, all is changed; the words you have spoken have driven the fiends out of my heart. I have nothing to do now but to obey, you to command: it is your right. Since you love me a little still, dispose of me. Bid me live: bid me die: bid me stay: bid me go. I shall never disobey the angel who loves me, my only friend upon the earth."

A single deep sob from Josephine was all the answer.

Then he could not help asking her why she had not trusted him?

"Why did you not say to me long ago, 'I love you, but I am a wife; my husband is an honest soldier, absent, and fighting for France: I am the guardian of his honor and my own; be just, be generous, be self-denying; depart and love me only as angels love'? Perhaps this might have helped me to show you that I too am a man of honor."

"Perhaps I was wrong," sighed Josephine. "I think I should have trusted more to you. But then, who would have thought you could really doubt my love? You were ill; I could not bear you to go till you were well, quite well. I saw no other way to keep you but this, to treat you with feigned coldness. You saw the coldness, but not what it cost me to maintain it. Yes, I was unjust; and inconsiderate, for I had many furtive joys to sustain me: I had you in my house under my care — that thought was always sweet — I had a hand in everything that was for your good, for your comfort. I helped Jacintha make your soup and your chocolate every day. I had the delight of lining the dressing-gown you were to wear. I had always some little thing

or other to do for you. These kept me up: I forgot in my selfishness that you had none of these supports, and that I was driving you to despair. I am a foolish, disingenuous woman: I have been very culpable. Forgive me!"

"Forgive you, angel of purity and goodness? I alone am to blame. What right had I to doubt your heart? I knew the whole story of your marriage; I saw your sweet pale face; but I was not pure enough to comprehend angelic virtue and unselfishness. Well, I am brought to my senses. There is but one thing for me to do — you bade me leave you to-morrow."

"I was very cruel."

"No! not cruel, wise. But I will be wiser. I shall go to-night."

"To-night, Camille?" said Josephine, turning pale.

"Ay! for to-night I am strong; to-morrow I may be weak. To-night everything thrusts me on the right path. To-morrow everything will draw me from it. Do not cry, beloved one; you and I have a hard fight. We must be true allies; whenever one is weak, then is the time for the other to be strong. I have been weaker than you, to my shame be it said; but this is my hour of strength. A light from heaven shows me my path. I am full of passion, but like you I have honor. You are Raynal's wife, and — Raynal saved my life."

"Ah! is it possible? When? where? may Heaven bless him for it!"

"Ask *him;* and say I told you of it — I have not strength to tell it you, but I will go to-night."

Then Josephine, who had resisted till all her strength was gone, whispered with a blush that it was too late to get a conveyance.

"I need none to carry my sword, my epaulets, and my love for you. I shall go on foot."

Josephine said nothing, but she began to walk slower and slower. And so the unfortunate pair came along creeping slowly with drooping heads towards the gate of the Pleasaunce. There their last walk in this world must end. Many a man and woman have gone to the scaffold with hearts less heavy and more hopeful than theirs.

"Dry your eyes, Josephine," said Camille with a deep sigh. "They are all out on the Pleasaunce."

"No, I will not dry my eyes," cried Josephine, almost violently. "I care for nothing now."

The baroness, the doctor, and Rose, were all in the Pleasaunce: and as the pair came in, lo! every eye was bent on Josephine.

She felt this, and her eyes sought the ground: benumbed as she was with despondency, she began now to dread some fresh stroke or other.

Camille felt doubly guilty and confused. How they all look at us, he thought. Do they know what a villain I have been? He determined to slip away, and pack up, and begone. However, nobody took any notice of him. The baroness drew Josephine apart. And Rose followed her mother and sister with eyes bent on the ground.

There was a strange solemnity about them all.

Aubertin remained behind. But even he took no notice of Camille, but walked up and down with his hands behind him, and a sad and troubled face. Camille felt his utter desolation. He was nothing to any of them. He resolved to go at once, and charge Aubertin with his last adieus to the family. It was a wise and manly resolve. He stopped Aubertin in the middle of his walk, and said in a faint voice of the deepest dejection, —

"Doctor, the time is come that I must once more

thank you for all your goodness to me, and bid you all farewell."

"What, going before your strength is re-established?" said the doctor politely, but not warmly.

"I am out of all danger, thanks to your skill."

"Colonel, at another time I should insist upon your staying a day or two longer; but now I think it would be unadvisable to press you to stay. Ah, colonel, you came to a happy house, but you leave a sad one. Poor Madame Raynal!"

"Sir!"

"You saw the baroness draw her aside."

"Y-yes."

"By this time she knows it."

"In Heaven's name what do you mean?" asked Camille.

"I forgot; you are not aware of the calamity that has fallen upon our beloved Josephine; on the darling of the house."

Camille turned cold with vague apprehension. But he contrived to stammer out, "No; tell me! for Heaven's sake tell me."

The doctor thus pressed revealed all in a very few words. "My poor friend," said he solemnly, "her husband — is dead."

CHAPTER XIV.

The baroness, as I have said, drew Josephine aside, and tried to break to her the sad news: but her own grief overcame her, and bursting into tears she bewailed the loss of her son. Josephine was greatly shocked. Death! — Raynal dead — her true, kind friend dead — her benefactor dead. She clung to her mother's neck, and sobbed with her. Presently she withdrew her face and suddenly hid it in both her hands.

She rose and kissed her mother once more: and went to her own room: and then, though there was none to see her, she hid her wet, but burning, cheeks in her hands.

Josephine confined herself for some days to her own room, leaving it only to go to the chapel in the park, where she spent hours in prayers for the dead and in self-humiliation. Her "tender conscience" accused herself bitterly for not having loved this gallant spirit more than she had.

Camille realized nothing at first; he looked all confused in the doctor's face, and was silent. Then after awhile he said, "Dead? Raynal dead?"

"Killed in action."

A red flush came to Camille's face, and his eyes went down to the ground at his very feet, nor did he once raise them while the doctor told him how the sad news had come. "Picard the notary brought us the *Moniteur*, and there was Commandant Raynal among the killed in a cavalry skirmish." With this, he took the journal from his pocket, and Camille read it, with awe-struck, and

other feelings he would have been sorry to see analyzed. He said not a word; and lowered his eyes to the ground.

"And now," said Aubertin, "you will excuse me. I must go to my poor friend the baroness. She had a mother's love for him who is no more: well she might."

Aubertin went away, and left Dujardin standing there like a statue, his eyes still glued to the ground at his feet.

The doctor was no sooner out of sight, than Camille raised his eyes furtively, like a guilty person, and looked irresolutely this way and that: at last he turned and went back to the place where he had meditated suicide and murder; looked down at it a long while, then looked up to heaven — then fell suddenly on his knees: and so remained till night-fall. Then he came back to the château.

He whispered to himself, "And I am afraid it is too late to go away to-night." He went softly into the saloon. Nobody was there but Rose and Aubertin. At sight of him Rose got up and left the room. But I suppose she went to Josephine; for she returned in a few minutes, and rang the bell, and ordered some supper to be brought up for Colonel Dujardin.

"You have not dined, I hear," said she, very coldly.

"I was afraid you were gone altogether," said the doctor: then turning to Rose, "He told me he was going this evening. You had better stay quiet another day or two," added he, kindly.

"Do you think so?" said Camille, timidly.

He stayed upon these terms. And now he began to examine himself. "Did I wish him dead? I hope I never formed such a thought! I don't remember ever wishing him dead." And he went twice a day to that place by the stream, and thought very solemnly what a terrible thing ungoverned passion is; and repented — not eloquently, but silently, sincerely.

But soon his impatient spirit began to torment itself again. Why did Josephine shun him now? Ah! she loved Raynal now that he was dead. Women love the thing they have lost; so he had heard say. In that case, the very sight of him would of course be odious to her: he could understand that. The absolute, unreasoning faith he once had in her had been so rudely shaken by her marriage with Raynal, that now he could only believe just so much as he saw, and he saw that she shunned him.

He became moody, sad, and disconsolate: and as Josephine shunned him, so he avoided all the others, and wandered for hours by himself, perplexed and miserable. After awhile, he became conscious that he was under a sort of surveillance. Rose de Beaurepaire, who had been so kind to him when he was confined to his own room, but had taken little notice of him since he came down, now resumed her care of him, and evidently made it her business to keep up his heart. She used to meet him out walking in a mysterious way, and in short, be always falling in with him and trying to cheer him up: with tolerable success.

Such was the state of affairs when the party was swelled and matters complicated by the arrival of one we have lost sight of.

Edouard Riviere retarded his cure by an impatient spirit: but he got well at last, and his uncle drove him in the cabriolet to his own quarters. The news of the house had been told him by letter, but, of course, in so vague and general a way that, thinking he knew all, in reality he knew nothing.

Josephine had married Raynal. The marriage was sudden, but no doubt there was an attachment: he had some reason to believe in sudden attachments. Colonel Dujardin, an old acquaintance, had come back to France wounded, and the good doctor had undertaken his cure:

this incident appeared neither strange nor any way important. What affected him most deeply was the death of Raynal, his personal friend and patron. But when his tyrants, as he called the surgeon and his uncle, gave him leave to go home, all feelings were overpowered by his great joy at the prospect of seeing Rose. He walked over to Beaurepaire, his arm in a sling, his heart beating. He was coming to receive the reward of all he had done, and all he had attempted. "I will surprise them," thought he. "I will see her face when I come in at the door: oh, happy hour! this pays for all." He entered the house without announcing himself; he went softly up to the saloon; t his great disappointment he found no one but the baroness. she received him kindly, but not with the warmth he expected. She was absorbed in her new grief. He asked timidly after her daughters. "Madame Raynal bears up, for the sake of others. You will not, however, see her: she keeps her room. My daughter Rose is taking a walk, I believe." After some polite inquiries, and sympathy with his accident, the baroness retired to indulge her grief, and Edouard thus liberated ran in search of his beloved.

He met her at the gate of the Pleasaunce, but not alone. She was walking with an officer, a handsome, commanding, haughty, brilliant officer. She was walking by his side, talking earnestly to him.

An arrow of ice shot through young Riviere; and then came a feeling of death at his heart, a new symptom in his young life.

The next moment Rose caught sight of him. She flushed all over and uttered a little exclamation, and she bounded towards him like a little antelope, and put out both her hands at once. He could only give her one.

"Ah!" she cried with an accent of heavenly pity, and took his hand with both hers.

This was like the meridian sun coming suddenly on a cold place. He was all happiness.

When Josephine heard he was come her eye flashed, and she said quickly, "I will come down to welcome him — dear Edouard!"

The sisters looked at one another. Josephine blushed. Rose smiled and kissed her. She colored higher still, and said, "No, she was ashamed to go down."

"Why?"

"Look at my face."

"I see nothing wrong with it, except that it eclipses other people's, and I have long forgiven you that."

"Oh, yes, dear Rose: look what a color it has, and a fortnight ago it was pale as ashes."

"Never mind; do you expect me to regret that?"

"Rose, I am a very bad woman."

"Are you, dear? then hook this for me."

"Yes, love. But I sometimes think you would forgive me if you knew how hard I pray to be better. Rose, I do try so to be as unhappy as I ought; but I can't, I can't. My cold heart seems as dead to unhappiness as once it was to happiness. Am I a heartless woman after all?"

"Not altogether," said Rose dryly. "Fasten my collar, dear, and don't torment yourself. You have suffered much and nobly. It was Heaven's will: you bowed to it. It was not Heaven's will that you should be blighted altogether. Bow in this, too, to Heaven's will: take things as they come, and do cease to try and reconcile feelings that are too opposite to live together."

"Ah! these are such comfortable words, Rose; but mamma will see this dreadful color in my cheek, and what can I say to her?"

"Ten to one it will not be observed; and if it should, I will say it is the excitement of seeing Edouard. Leave all to me."

Josephine greeted Edouard most affectionately, drew from him his whole history, and petted him and sympathized with him deliciously, and made him the hero of the evening. Camille, who was not naturally of a jealous temper, bore this very well at first, but at last he looked so bitter at her neglect of him, that Rose took him aside to soothe him. Edouard, missing the auditor he most valued, and seeing her in secret conference with the brilliant colonel, felt a return of the jealous pangs that had seized him at first sight of the man; and so they played at cross purposes.

At another period of the evening the conversation became more general; and Edouard took a dislike to Colonel Dujardin. A young man of twenty-eight nearly always looks on a boy of twenty-one with the air of a superior, and this assumption, not being an ill-natured one, is apt to be so easy and so undefined that the younger hardly knows how to resent or to resist it. But Edouard was a little vain as we know; and the Colonel jarred him terribly. His quick haughty eye jarred him. His regimentals jarred him: they fitted like a glove. His mustache and his manner jarred him, and, worst of all, his cool familiarity with Rose, who seemed to court him rather than be courted by him. He put this act of Rose's to the colonel's account, according to the custom of lovers, and revenged himself in a small way by telling Josephine in her ear "that the colonel produced on his mind the effect of an intolerable puppy."

Josephine colored up and looked at him with a momentary surprise. She said quietly, "Military men do give themselves some airs, but he is very amiable at bottom. You must make a better acquaintance with him, and then he will reveal to you his nobler qualities." — "Oh! I have no particular desire," sneered unlucky Edouard. Sweet as Josephine was, this was too much for her: she

said nothing; but she quietly turned Edouard over to Aubertin, and joined Rose, and under cover of her had a sweet timid chat with her falsely accused.

This occupied the two so entirely that Edouard was neglected. This hurt his foible, and seemed to be so unkind on the very first day of his return that he made his adieus to the baroness, and marched off in dudgeon unobserved.

Rose missed him first, but said nothing.

When Josephine saw he was gone, she uttered a little exclamation, and looked at Rose. Rose put on a mien of haughty indifference, but the water was in her eyes.

Josephine looked sorrowful.

When they talked over everything together at night, she reproached herself. "We behaved ill to poor Edouard: we neglected him."

"He is a little cross, ill-tempered fellow," said Rose pettishly.

"Oh, no! no!"

"And as vain as a peacock."

"Has he not some right to be vain in this house?"

"Yes, — no. I am very angry with him. I won't hear a word in his favor," said Rose pouting: then she gave his defender a kiss. "Yes, dear," said Josephine, answering the kiss, and ignoring the words, "he is a dear; and he is not cross, nor so very vain, poor boy! now don't you see what it was?"

"No."

"Yes, you do, you little cunning thing: you are too shrewd not to see everything."

"No, indeed, Josephine; do tell me, don't keep me waiting: I can't bear that."

"Well, then — jealous! A little."

"Jealous? Oh, what fun! Of Camille? Ha! ha! Little goose!"

"And," said Josephine very seriously, "I almost think he would be jealous of any one that occupied your attention. I watched him more or less all the evening."

"All the better. I'll torment my lord."

"Heaven forbid you should be so cruel."

"Oh! I will not make him unhappy, but I'll tease him a little; it is not in nature to abstain."

This foible detected in her lover, Rose was very gay at the prospect of amusement it afforded her.

And I think I have many readers who at this moment are awaiting unmixed enjoyment and hilarity from the same source.

I wish them joy of their prospect.

Edouard called the next day: he wore a gloomy air. Rose met this with a particularly cheerful one; on this, Edouard's face cleared up, and he was himself again; agreeable as this was, Rose felt a little disappointed. "I am afraid he is not very jealous after all," thought she.

Josephine left her room this day and mingled once more with the family. The bare sight of her was enough for Camille at first, but after awhile he wanted more. He wanted to be often alone with her; but several causes co-operated to make her shy of giving him many such opportunities: first, her natural delicacy, coupled with her habit of self-denial; then her fear of shocking her mother, and lastly her fear of her own heart, and of Camille, whose power over her she knew. For Camille, when he did get a sweet word alone with her, seemed to forget everything except that she was his betrothed, and that he had come back alive to marry her. He spoke to her of his love with an ardor and an urgency that made her thrill with happiness, but at the same time shrink with a certain fear and self-reproach. Possessed with a feeling no stronger than hers, but

single, he did not comprehend the tumult, the trouble, the daily contest in her heart. The wind seemed to him to be always changing, and hot and cold the same hour. Since he did not even see that she was acting in hourly fear of her mother's eye, he was little likely to penetrate her more hidden sentiments; and then he had not touched her key-note, — self-denial.

Women are self-denying and uncandid. Men are self-indulgent and outspoken.

And this is the key to a thousand double misunderstandings; for believe me, good women are just as stupid in misunderstanding men as honest men are in misunderstanding women.

To Camille, Josephine's fluctuations, joys, tremors, love, terror, modesty, seemed one grand total, caprice. The component parts of it he saw not; and her caprice tortured him almost to madness. Too penitent to give way again to violent passion, he gently fretted. His health retrograded and his temper began to sour. The eye of timid love that watched him with maternal anxiety from under its long lashes saw this with dismay, and Rose, who looked into her sister's bosom, devoted herself once more to soothe him without compromising Josephine's delicacy. Matters were not so bad but what a fine sprightly girl like Rose could cheer up a dejected but manly colonel; and Rose was generally successful.

But then, unfortunately, this led to a fresh mystification. Riviere's natural jealousy revived, and found constant food in the attention Rose paid Camille, a brilliant colonel living in the house while he, poor wretch, lived in lodgings. The false position of all the parties brought about some singular turns. I give from their number one that forms a link, though a small one, in my narrative.

One day Edouard came to tell Rose she was making

him unhappy; he had her alone in the Pleasaunce; she received him with a radiant smile, and they had a charming talk, — a talk all about *him:* what the family owed him, etc.

On this, his late jealousy and sense of injury seemed a thing of three years ago, and never to return. So hard it is for the loving heart to resist its sun.

Jacintha came with a message from the colonel: "Would it be agreeable to Mademoiselle Rose to walk with him at the usual hour?"

"Certainly," said Rose.

As Jacintha was retiring Edouard called to her to stop a minute.

Then, turning to Rose, he begged her very ceremoniously to reconsider that determination.

"What determination?"

"To sacrifice me to this Colonel Dujardin." Still politely, only a little grimly.

Rose opened her eyes. "Are you mad?" inquired she with quiet *hauteur.*

"Neither mad nor a fool," was the reply. "I love you too well to share your regard with any one, upon any terms; least of all upon these, that there is to be a man in the world at whose beck and call you are to be, and at whose orders you are to break off an interview with me. Perdition!"

"Dear Edouard, what folly! Can you suspect me of discourtesy, as well as of — I know not what. Colonel Dujardin will join us, that is all, and we shall take a little walk with him."

"Not I. I decline the intrusion; you are engaged with me, and I have things to say to you that are not fit for that puppy to hear. So choose between me and him, and choose forever."

Rose colored. "I should be very sorry to choose

either of you forever; but for this afternoon I choose you."

"Oh, thank you — my whole life shall prove my gratitude for this preference."

Rose beckoned Jacintha, and sent her with an excuse to Colonel Dujardin. She then turned with an air of mock submission to Edouard. "I am at monsieur's *orders*."

Then this unhappy novice, being naturally good-natured, thanked her again and again for her condescension in setting his heart at rest. He proposed a walk, since his interference had lost her one. She yielded a cold assent. This vexed him, but he took it for granted it would wear off before the end of the walk. Edouard's heart bounded, but he loved her too sincerely to be happy unless he could see her happy too; the malicious thing saw this, or perhaps knew it by instinct, and by means of this good feeling of his she revenged herself for his tyranny. She tortured him as only a woman can torture, and as even she can torture only a worthy man, and one who loves her. In the course of that short walk this inexperienced girl, strong in the instincts and inborn arts of her sex, drove pins and needles, needles and pins, of all sorts and sizes, through her lover's heart.

She was everything by turns, except kind, and nothing for long together. She was peevish, she was ostentatiously patient and submissive, she was inattentive to her companion and seemingly wrapped up in contemplation of absent things and persons, the colonel to wit; she was dogged, repulsive, and cold; and she never was herself a single moment. They returned to the gate of the Pleasaunce. "Well, mademoiselle," said Riviere very sadly, "that interloper might as well have been with us."

"Of course he might, and you would have lost nothing

by permitting me to be courteous to a guest and an invalid. If you had not played the tyrant, and taken the matter into your own hands, I should have found means to soothe your jeal— I mean your vanity; but you preferred to have your own way. Well, you have had it."

"Yes, mademoiselle, you have given me a lesson; you have shown me how idle it is to attempt to force a young lady's inclinations in anything."

He bade her good-day, and went away sorrowful.

She cut Camille dead for the rest of the day.

Next morning, early, Edouard called expressly to see her. "Mademoiselle Rose," said he, humbly, "I called to apologize for the ungentlemanly tone of my remonstrances yesterday."

"Fiddle-dee," said Rose. "Don't do it again; that is the best apology."

"I am not likely to offend so again," said he sadly. "I am going away. I am sorry to say I am promoted; my new post is ten leagues. *He will have it all his own way* now. But perhaps it is best. Were I to stay here, I foresee you would soon lose whatever friendly feeling you have for me."

"Am I so changeable? I am not considered so," remonstrated Rose, gently.

Riviere explained; "I am not vain," said he, with that self-knowledge which is so general an attribute of human beings; "no man less so, nor am I jealous; but I respect myself, and I could never be content to share your time and your regard with Colonel Dujardin, nor with a much better man. See now; he has made me arrogant. Was I ever so before?"

"No! no! no! and I forgive you now, my poor Edouard."

"He has made you cold as ice to me."

"No! that was my own wickedness and spitefulness."

"Wickedness, spitefulness! they are not in your nature. It is all that wretch's doing."

Rose sighed, but she said nothing; for she saw that to excuse Camille would only make the jealous one more bitter against him.

"Will you deign to write to me at my new post? once a month? in answer to my letters?"

"Yes, dear. But you will ride over sometimes to see us."

"Oh, yes; but for some little time I shall not be able. The duties of a new post."

"Perhaps in a month — a fortnight?"

"Sooner perhaps; the moment I hear that man is out of the house."

Edouard went away, dogged and sad; Rose shut herself up in her room and had a good cry. In the afternoon Josephine came and remonstrated with her. "You have not walked with him at all to-day."

"No; you must pet him yourself for once. I hate the sight of him; it has made mischief between Edouard and me, my being so attentive to him. Edouard is jealous, and I cannot wonder. After all, what right have I to mystify him who honors me with his affection?"

Then, being pressed with questions by Josephine, she related to her all that had passed between Edouard and her, word for word.

"Poor Camille!" sighed Josephine the just.

"Oh, dear, yes! poor Camille! who has the power to make us all miserable, and who does it, and will go on doing it until he is happy himself."

"Ah! would to Heaven I could make him as happy as he deserves to be."

"You could easily make him much happier than that. And why not do it?"

"O Rose," said Josephine, shocked, "how can you advise me so?"

She then asked her if she thought it possible that Camille could be ignorant of her heart.

"Josephine," replied Rose, angrily, "these men are absurd: they believe only what they see. I have done what I can for you and Camille, but it is useless. Would you have him believe you love him, you must yourself be kind to him; and it would be a charitable action: you would make four unhappy people happy, or, at least, put them on the road; *now* they are off the road, and, by what I have seen to-day, I think, if we go on so much longer, it will be too late to try to return. Come, Josephine, for my sake! Let me go and tell him you will consent — to all our happinesses. There, the crime is mine." And she ran off in spite of Josephine's faint and hypocritical entreaties. She returns the next minute looking all aghast. "It is too late," said she. "He is going away. I am sure he is, for he is packing up his things to go. I spied through the old place and saw him. He was sighing like a furnace as he strapped his portmanteau. I hate him, of course, but I was sorry for him. I could not help being. He sighed so all the time, piteously."

Josephine turned pale, and lifted her hands in surprise and dismay.

"Depend on it, Josephine, we are wrong," said Rose, firmly: "these wretches will not stand our nonsense above a certain time: they are not such fools. We are mismanaging: one gone, the other going; both losing faith in us."

Josephine's color returned to her cheek, and then mounted high. Presently she smiled, a smile full of conscious power and furtive complacency, and said quietly, "He will not go."

Rose was pleased, but not surprised, to hear her sister speak so confidently, for she knew her power over Camille. "That is right," said she, "go to him, and say two honest words: 'I bid you stay.'"

"O Rose! no!"

"Poltroon! You know he would go down on his knees, and stay directly."

"No: I should blush all my life before you and him. I *could* not. I should let him go sooner, almost. Oh, no! I will never ask a man to stay who wishes to leave me. But just you go to him, and say Madame Raynal is going to take a little walk: will he do her the honor to be her companion? Not a word more, if you love me."

"I'll go. Hypocrite!"

Josephine received Camille with a bright smile. She seemed in unusually good spirits, and overflowing with kindness and innocent affection. On this his high gloomy brow relaxed, and all his prospects brightened as by magic. Then she communicated to him a number of little plans for next week and the week after. Among the rest he was to go with her and Rose to Frejus. "Such a sweet place: I want to show it you. You will come?"

He hesitated a single moment: a moment of intense anxiety to the smiling Josephine.

"Yes! he would come: it was a great temptation, he saw so little of her."

"Well, you will see more of me now."

"Shall I see you every day — alone, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, if you wish it," replied Josephine, in an off-hand, indifferent way.

He seized her hand and devoured it with kisses.

"Foolish thing!" murmured she, looking down on him with ineffable tenderness. "Should I not be

always with you if I consulted my inclination? — let me go."

"No! consult your inclination a little longer."

"Must I?"

"Yes; that shall be your punishment."

"For what? What have I done?" asked she with an air of great innocence.

"You have made me happy, me who adore you," was the evasive reply.

Josephine came in from her walk with a high color and beaming eyes, and screamed, "Run, Rose!"

On this concise, and to us not very clear instruction, Rose slipped up the secret stair. She saw Camille come in and gravely unpack his little portmanteau, and dispose his things in the drawers with soldier-like neatness, and hum an agreeable march. She came and told Josephine.

"Ah!" said Josephine with a little sigh of pleasure, and a gentle triumph in her eyes.

She had not only got her desire, but had arrived at it her way, — woman's way, round about.

This adroit benevolence led to more than she bargained for. She and Camille were now together every day: and their hearts, being under restraint in public, melted together all the more in their stolen interviews.

At the third delicious interview the modest Camille begged Josephine to be his wife directly.

Have you noticed those half tame deer that come up to you in a park so lovingly, with great tender eyes, and, being now almost within reach, stop short, and with bodies fixed like statues on pedestals, crane out their graceful necks for sugar, or bread, or a chestnut, or a pocket-handkerchief? Do but offer to put your hand upon them, away they bound that moment twenty yards, and then stand quite still, and look at your hand and you, with great inquiring, suspicious, tender eyes.

So Josephine started at Camille's audacious proposal. "Never mention such a thing to me again: or — or, I will not walk with you any more:" then she thrilled with pleasure at the obnoxious idea, "she Camille's wife!" and colored all over — with rage, Camille thought. He promised submissively not to renew the topic: no more he did till next day. Josephine had spent nearly the whole interval in thinking of it; so she was prepared to put him down by calm reasons. She proceeded to do so, gently, but firmly.

Lo and behold! what does he do, but meets her with just as many reasons, and just as calm ones: and urges them gently, but firmly.

Heaven had been very kind to them: why should they be unkind to themselves? They had had a great escape: why not accept the happiness, as, being persons of honor, they had accepted the misery? with many other arguments, differing in other things, but agreeing in this, that they were all sober, grave, and full of common-sense.

Finding him not defenceless on the score of reason, she shifted her ground and appealed to his delicacy. On this he appealed to her love, and then calm reason was jostled off the field, and passion and sentiment battled in her place.

In these contests day by day renewed, Camille had many advantages.

Rose, though she did not like him, had now declared on his side. She refused to show him the least attention. This threw him on Josephine: and when Josephine begged her to help reduce Camille to reason, her answer would be, —

"Hypocrite!" with a kiss: or else she would say, with a half comic petulance, "No! no! I am on his side. Give him his own way, or he will make us all four miserable."

Thus Josephine's ally went over to the enemy.

And then this coy young lady's very power of resistance began to give way. She had now battled for months against her own heart: first for her mother; then, in a far more terrible conflict for Raynal, for honor and purity; and of late she had been battling, still against her own heart, for delicacy, for etiquette, things very dear to her, but not so great, holy, and sustaining as honor and charity that were her very household gods: and so, just when the motives of resistance were lowered, the length of the resistance began to wear her out.

For nothing is so hard to her sex as a long steady struggle. In matters physical, this is the thing the muscles of the fair cannot stand; in matters intellectual and moral, the long strain it is that beats them dead.

Do not look for a Bacona, a Newtona, a Handella, a Victoria Huga.

Some American ladies tell us education has stopped the growth of these.

No! mesdames. These are not in nature.

They can bubble letters in ten minutes that you could no more deliver to order in ten days than a river can play like a fountain. They can sparkle gems of stories: they can flash little diamonds of poems. The entire sex has never produced one opera nor one epic that mankind could tolerate: and why? these come by long, high-strung labor. But, weak as they are in the long run of everything but the affections (and there giants), they are all overpowering while their gallop lasts. Fragilla shall dance any two of you flat on the floor before four o'clock, and then dance on till the peep of day.

Only you trundle off to your business as usual, and could dance again the next night, and so on through countless ages.

She who danced you into nothing is in bed, a human jelly tipped with headache.

What did Josephine say to Rose one day? "I am tired of saying 'No! no! no! no! no!' forever and ever to him I love."

But this was not all. She was not free from self-reproach. Camille's faith in her had stood firm. Hers in him had not. She had wronged him, first by believing him false, then by marrying another. One day she asked his pardon for this. He replied that he had forgiven that; but would she be good enough to make him forget it?

"I wish I could."

"You can. Marry me: then your relation to that man will seem but a hideous dream. I shall be able to say, looking at you, my wife, 'I was faithful: I suffered something for her; I came home: she loved me still; the proof is, she was my wife within three months of my return.'"

When he said that to her in the Pleasaunce, if there had been a priest at hand —. In a word, Josephine longed to show him her love, yet wished not to shock her mother, nor offend her own sense of delicacy; but Camille cared for nothing but his love. To sacrifice love and happiness, even for a time, to etiquette, seemed to him to be trifling with the substance of great things for the shadow of petty things; and he said so: sometimes sadly, sometimes almost bitterly.

So Josephine was a beleagured fortress, attacked with one will, and defended by troops, one-third of which were hot on the side of the besiegers.

When singleness attacks division, you know the result beforehand. Why then should I spin words? I will not trace so ill-matched a contest step by step, sentence by sentence: let me rather hasten to relate the one peculiarity that arose out of this trite contest, where, under the names of Camille and Josephine, the two

great sexes may be seen acting the whole world-wide distich, —

> "It's a man's part to try,
> And a woman's to deny [for a while?]."

Finding her own resolutions oozing away, Josephine caught at another person.

She said to Camille before Rose, —

"Even if I could bring myself to snatch at happiness in this indelicate way — scarce a month after, oh!" And there ended the lady's sentence. In the absence of a legitimate full stop, she put one hand before her lovely face to hide it, and so no more. But some two minutes after she delivered the rest in the form and with the tone of a distinct remark, "No: my mother would never consent."

"Yes, she would if you could be brought to implore her as earnestly as I implore you."

"Now would she?" asked Josephine, turning quickly to her sister.

"No, never. Our mother would look with horror on such a proposal. A daughter of hers to marry within a twelvemonth of her widowhood!"

"There, you see, Camille."

"And, besides, she loved Raynal so; she has not forgotten him as we have, almost."

"Ungrateful creature that I am!" sighed Josephine!

"She mourns for him every day. Often I see her eyes suddenly fill; that is for him. Josephine's influence with mamma is very great: it is double mine: but if we all went on our knees to her, the doctor and all, she would never consent."

"There you see, Camille: and I could not defy my mother, even for you."

Camille sighed.

"I see everything is against me, even my love: for that love is too much akin to veneration to propose to you a clandestine marriage."

"Oh, thank you! bless you for respecting as well as loving me, dear Camille," said Josephine.

These words, uttered with gentle warmth, were some consolation to Camille, and confirmed him, as they were intended to do, in the above good resolution. He smiled.

"*Maladroit!*" muttered Rose.

"Why *maladroit?*" asked Camille, opening his eyes.

"Let us talk of something else," replied Rose, coolly.

Camille turned red. He understood that he had done something very stupid, but he could not conceive what. He looked from one sister to the other alternately. Rose was smiling ironically, Josephine had her eyes bent demurely on a handkerchief she was embroidering.

That evening Camille drew Rose aside, and asked for an explanation of her "*maladroit.*"

"So it was," replied Rose, sharply.

But as this did not make the matter quite clear, Camille begged a little further explanation.

"Was it your part to make difficulties?"

"No, indeed."

"Was it for you to tell her a secret marriage would not be delicate? Do you think she will be behind you in delicacy? or that a love without respect will satisfy her? yet you must go and tell her you respected her too much to ask her to marry you secretly. In other words, situated as she is, you asked her not to marry you at all: she consented to that directly; what else could you expect?"

"*Maladroit!* indeed," said Camille, "but I would not have said it, only I thought"—

"You thought nothing would induce her to marry secretly, so you said to yourself, 'I will assume a virtue:

I will do a bit of cheap self-denial: decline to the sound of trumpets what another will be sure to deny me if I don't — ha! ha!' — well, for your comfort, I am by no means so sure she might not have been brought to do *anything* for you, except openly defy mamma: but now of course" —

And here this young lady's sentence ended: for the sisters, unlike in most, things were one in grammar.

Camille was so disconcerted and sad at what he had done, that Rose began to pity him: so she rallied him a little longer in spite of her pity: and then all of a sudden gave him her hand, and said she would try and repair the mischief.

He began to smother her hand with kisses.

"Oh!" said she, "I don't deserve all that: I have a motive of my own; let me alone, child, do. Your unlucky speech will be quoted to me a dozen times. Never mind."

Rose went and bribed Josephine to consent.

"Come, mamma shall not know, and as for you, you shall scarcely move in the matter; only do not oppose me very violently, and all will be well."

"Ah, Rose!" said Josephine; "it is delightful — terrible, I mean — to have a little creature about one that reads one like this. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Why, do the best you can under all the circumstances. His wound is healed, you know; he must go back to the army; you have both suffered to the limits of mortal endurance. Is he to go away unhappy, in any doubt of your affection? and you to remain behind with the misery of self-reproach added to the desolation of absence? — think."

"It is cruel. But to deceive my mother!"

"Do not say deceive our mother; that is such a shocking phrase."

Rose then reminded Josephine that their confessor had told them a wise reticence was not the same thing as a moral deceit. She reminded her, too, how often they had acted on his advice and always with good effect; how many anxieties and worries they had saved their mother by reticence. Josephine assented warmly to this.

Was there not some reason to think they had saved their mother's very life by these reticences? Josephine assented. "And, Josephine, you are of age; you are your own mistress; you have a right to marry whom you please: and, sooner or later, you will certainly marry Camille. I doubt whether even our mother could prevail on you to refuse him altogether. So it is but a question of time, and of giving our mother pain, or sparing her pain. Dear mamma is old; she is prejudiced. Why shock her prejudices? She could not be brought to understand the case: these things never happened in her day. Everything seems to have gone by rule then. Let us do nothing to worry her for the short time she has to live. Let us take a course between pain to her and cruelty to you and Camille."

These arguments went far to convince Josephine: for her own heart supported them. She went from her solid objections to untenable ones — a great point gained. She urged the difficulty, the impossibility of a secret marriage.

Camille burst in here: he undertook at once to overcome these imaginary difficulties. "They could be married at a distance."

"You will find no priest who will consent to do such a wicked thing as marry us without my mother's knowledge," objected Josephine.

"Oh! as to that," said Rose, "you know the mayor marries people nowadays."

"I will not be married again without a priest," said Josephine, sharply.

"Nor I," said Camille. "I know a mayor who will do the civil forms for me, and a priest who will marry me in the sight of Heaven, and both will keep it secret for love of me till it shall please Josephine to throw off this disguise."

"Who is the priest?" inquired Josephine, keenly.

"An old curé: he lives near Frejus: he was my tutor, and the mayor is the mayor of Frejus, also an old friend of mine."

"But what on earth will you say to them?"

"That is my affair: I must give them some reasons which compel me to keep my marriage secret. Oh! I shall have to tell them some fibs, of course."

"There, I thought so! I will not have you telling fibs; it lowers you."

"Of course it does; but you can't have secrecy without a fib or two."

"Fibs that will injure no one," said Rose, majestically.

From this day Camille began to act as well as to talk. He bought a light calèche and a powerful horse, and elected factotum Dard his groom. Camille rode over to Frejus and told a made-up story to the old curé and the mayor, and these his old friends believed every word he said, and readily promised their services and strict secrecy.

He told the young ladies what he had done.

Rose approved. Josephine shook her head, and seeing matters going as her heart desired and her conscience did not quite approve, she suddenly affected to be next to nobody in the business — to be resigned, passive, and disposed of to her surprise by Queen Rose and King Camille, without herself taking any actual part in their proceedings.

At last the great day arrived on which Camille and Josephine were to be married at Frejus.

The mayor awaited them at eleven o'clock. The curé at twelve. The family had been duly prepared for this excursion by several smaller ones.

Rose announced their intention over night; a part of it.

"Mamma," said she, blushing a little, "Colonel Dujardin is good enough to take us to Frejus to-morrow. It is a long way, and we must breakfast early or we shall not be back to dinner."

"Do so, my child. I hope you will have a fine day: and mind you take plenty of wraps with you in case of a shower."

At seven o'clock the next morning Camille and the two ladies took a hasty cup of coffee together instead of breakfast, and then Dard brought the calèche round.

The ladies got in, and Camille had just taken the reins in his hand, when Jacintha screamed to him from the hall, "Wait a moment, colonel, wait a moment! The doctor! don't go without the doctor!" And the next moment Dr. Aubertin appeared with his cloak on his arm, and, saluting the ladies politely, seated himself quietly in the vehicle before the party had recovered their surprise.

The ladies managed to keep their countenances, but Dujardin's discomfiture was evident.

He looked piteously at Josephine, and then asked Aubertin if they were to set him down anywhere in particular.

"Oh, no; I am going with you to Frejus," was the quiet reply.

Josephine quaked. Camille was devoured with secret rage: he lashed the horse and away they went.

It was a silent party. The doctor seemed in a reverie.

The others did not know what to think, much less to say. Aubertin sat by Camille's side; so the latter could hold no secret communication with either lady.

Now it was not the doctor's habit to rise at this time of the morning: yet there he was, going with them to Frejus uninvited.

Josephine was in agony; had their intention transpired through some imprudence of Camille?

Camille was terribly uneasy. He concluded the secret had transpired through female indiscretion. Then they all tortured themselves as to the old man's intention. But what seemed most likely was, that he was with them to prevent a clandestine marriage by his bare presence, without making a scene and shocking Josephine's pride: and if so, was he there by his own impulse? No, it was rather to be feared that all this was done by order of the baroness. There was a finesse about it that smacked of a feminine origin, and the baroness was very capable of adopting such a means as this, to spare her own pride and her favorite daughter's. "The clandestine" is not all sugar. A more miserable party never went along, even to a wedding.

After waiting a long time for the doctor to declare himself, they turned desperate, and began to chatter all manner of trifles. This had a good effect: it roused Aubertin from his reverie, and presently he gave them the following piece of information: "I told you the other day that a nephew of mine was just dead; a nephew I had not seen for many years. Well, my friends, I received last night a hasty summons to his funeral."

"At Frejus?"

"No, at Paris. The invitation was so pressing, that I was obliged to go. The letter informed me, however, that a diligence passes through Frejus, at eleven o'clock, for Paris. I heard you say you were going to Frejus;

so I packed up a few changes of linen, and my MS., my work on entomology, which at my last visit to the capital all the publishers were mad enough to refuse: here it is. *Apropos*, has Jacintha put my bag into the carriage?"

On this a fierce foot-search, and the bag was found. Meantime, Josephine leaned back in her seat with a sigh of thankfulness. She was more intent on not being found out than on being married. But Camille, who was more intent on being married than on not being found out, was asking himself, with fury, how on earth they should get rid of Aubertin in time.

Well, of course, under such circumstances as these the diligence did not come to its time, nor till long after; and all the while they were waiting for it they were failing their rendezvous with the mayor, and making their rendezvous with the curate impossible. But, above all, there was the risk of one or other of those friends coming up and blurting all out, taking for granted that the doctor must be in their confidence, or why bring him.

At last, at half-past eleven o'clock, to their great relief, up came the diligence. The doctor prepared to take his place in the interior, when the conductor politely informed him that the vehicle stopped there a quarter of an hour.

"In that case I will not abandon my friends," said the doctor, affectionately.

One of his friends gnashed his teeth at this mark of affection. But Josephine smiled sweetly.

At last he was gone; but it wanted ten minutes only to twelve.

Josephine inquired amiably, whether it would not be as well to postpone matters to another day — meaning forever. "My *ardor* is chilled," said she, and showed symptoms of crying at what she had gone through.

Camille replied by half dragging them to the mayor. That worthy received them with profound, though somewhat demure respect, and invited them to a table sumptuously served. The ladies, out of politeness, were about to assent, but Camille begged permission to postpone that part until after the ceremony.

At last, to their astonishment, they were married. Then, with a promise to return and dine with the mayor, they went to the curé. Lo and behold! he was gone to visit a sick person. "He had waited a long time for them," said the servant.

Josephine was much disconcerted, and showed a disposition to cry again. The servant, a good-natured girl, nosed a wedding, and offered to run and bring his reverence in a minute.

Presently there came an old silvery-haired man, who addressed them all as his children. He took them to the church, and blessed their union; and for the first time Josephine felt as if Heaven consented. They took a gentle farewell of him, and went back to the mayor's to dine; and at this stage of the business Rose and Josephine at last effected a downright simultaneous cry, *apropos* of nothing that was then occurring.

This refreshed them mightily, and they glowed at the mayor's table like roses washed with dew.

But oh! how glad at heart they all were to find themselves in the carriage once more going home to Beaurepaire.

Rose and Josephine sat intertwined on the back seat; Camille, the reins in his right hand, nearly turned his back on the horse, and leaned back over to them and purred to Rose and his wife with ineffable triumph and tenderness.

The lovers were in Elysium, and Rose was not a little proud of her good management in ending all their

troubles. Their mother received them back with great, and as they fancied, with singular, affection. She was beginning to be anxious about them, she said. Then her kindness gave these happy souls a pang it never gave them before.

Since the above events scarce a fortnight had elapsed; but such a change! Camille sunburnt and healthy, and full of animation and confidence; Josephine beaming with suppressed happiness, and more beautiful than Rose could ever remember to have seen her. For a soft halo of love and happiness shone around her head; a new and indefinable attraction bloomed on her face. She was a wife. Her eye, that used to glance furtively on Camille, now dwelt demurely on him; dwelt with a sort of gentle wonder and admiration as well as affection, and, when he came or passed very near her, a keen observer might have seen her thrill.

She kept a good deal out of her mother's way; for she felt within that her face must be too happy. She feared to shock her mother's grief with her radiance. She was ashamed of feeling unmixed heaven. But the flood of secret bliss she floated in bore all misgivings away. The pair were forever stealing away together for hours, and on these occasions Rose used to keep out of her mother's sight, until they should return. So then the new-married couple could wander hand in hand through the thick woods of Beaurepaire, whose fresh green leaves were now just out, and hear the distant cuckoo, and sit on mossy banks, and pour love into one another's eyes, and plan ages of happiness, and murmur their deep passion and their bliss almost more than mortal; could do all this and more, without shocking propriety. These sweet duets passed for trios: for on their return Rose would be out looking for them, or would go and meet them at some distance, and all three would go up together

to the baroness, as from a joint excursion. And when they went up to their bedrooms, Josephine would throw her arms round her sister's neck, and sigh, "It is not happiness, it is beatitude!"

Meantime, the baroness mourned for Raynal. Her grief showed no decrease. Rose even fancied at times she wore a gloomy and discontented look as well; but on reflection she attributed that to her own fancy, or to the contrast that had now sprung up in her sister's beaming complacency.

Rose, when she found herself left day after day alone for hours, was sad and thought of Edouard. And this feeling gained on her day by day.

At last, one afternoon, she locked herself in her own room, and, after a long contest with her pride, which, if not indomitable, was next door to it, she sat down to write him a little letter. Now, in this letter, in the place devoted by men to their after-thoughts, by women to their pretended after-thoughts; i. e., to what they have been thinking of all through the letter, she dropped a careless hint that all the party missed him very much, "even the obnoxious colonel, who, by-the-by, has transferred his services elsewhere. I have forgiven him that, because he has said civil things about you."

Rose was reading her letter over again, to make sure that all the principal expressions were indistinct, and that the composition generally, except the postscript, resembled a Delphic oracle, when there was a hasty footstep, and a tap at her door, and in came Jacintha, excited.

"He is come, mademoiselle," cried she, and nodded her head like a mandarin, only more knowingly; then she added, "So you may burn that." For her quick eye had glanced at the table.

"Who is come?" inquired Rose, eagerly.

"Why, your one?"

"My one?" asked the young lady, reddening, "my what?"

"The little one — Edouard — Monsieur Riviere."

"Oh, Monsieur Riviere," said Rose, acting *nonchalance*. "Why could you not say so? you use such phrases, who can conjecture what you mean? I will come to Monsieur Riviere directly; mamma will be so glad."

Jacintha gone, Rose tore up the letter and locked up the pieces, then ran to the glass. Etc.

Edouard had been so profoundly miserable he could stand it no longer; in spite of his determination not to visit Beaurepaire while it contained a rival, he rode over to see whether he had not tormented himself idly: above all, to see the beloved face.

Jacintha put him into the *salle à manger*. "By that you will see her alone," said the knowing Jacintha. He sat down, hat and whip in hand, and wondered how he should be received — if at all.

In glides Rose all sprightliness and good-humor, and puts out her hand to him; the which he kisses.

"How could I keep away so long?" asked he vaguely, and self-astonished.

"How indeed, and we missing you so all the time!"

"Have *you* missed me?" was the eager inquiry.

"Oh, no!" was the cheerful reply; "but all the rest have."

Presently the malicious thing gave a sudden start.

"Oh! such a piece of news; you remember Colonel Dujardin, the obnoxious colonel?"

No answer.

"Transferred his attentions. Fancy!"

"Who to?"

"To Josephine and mamma. But such are the mili-

tary. He only wanted to get rid of you: this done (through your want of spirit), he scorns the rich prize; so now I scorn *him*. Will you come for a walk?"

"Oh, yes!"

"We will go and look for my deserter. I say, tell me now; cannot I write to the commander-in-chief about this? a soldier has no right to be a deserter, has he? tell me, you are a public man, and know everything except my heart."

"Is it not too bad to tease me to-day?"

"Yes! but please! I have had few amusements of late. I find it so dull without you to tease."

Formal permission to tease being conceded, she went that instant on the opposite tack, and began to tell him how she had missed him, and how sorry she had been anything should have occurred to vex their kind good friend. In short, Edouard spent a delightful day, for Rose took him one way to meet Josephine, who, she knew, was coming another. At night the last embers of jealousy got quenched, for Josephine was a wife now, and had already begun to tell Camille all her little innocent secrets; and she told him all about Edouard and Rose, and gave him his orders; so he treated Rose with great respect before Edouard; but paid her no marked attention; also he was affable to Riviere, who, having ceased to suspect, began to like him.

In the course of the evening, the colonel also informed the baroness that he expected every day an order to join the army of the Rhine.

Edouard pricked his ears.

The baroness said no more than politeness dictated. She did not press him to stay, but treated his departure as a matter of course. Riviere rode home late in the evening in high spirits.

The next day Rose varied her late deportment; she

sang snatches of melody, going about the house; it was for all the world like a bird chirping. In the middle of one chirp Jacintha interfered. "Hush, mademoiselle, your mamma! she is at the bottom of the corridor."

"What was I thinking of?" said Rose.

"Oh! I dare say you know, mademoiselle," replied the privileged domestic.

A letter of good news came from Aubertin. That summons to his nephew's funeral was an era in his harmless life.

The said nephew was a rich man and an oddity; one of those who love to surprise folk. Moreover, he had no children, and detected his nephews and nieces being unnaturally civil to him. "Waiting to cut me up," was his generous reading of them. So with this he made a will, and there defied, as far as in him lay, the laws of nature; for he set his wealth a-flowing backwards instead of forwards; he handed his property up to an ancestor, instead of down to posterity.

All this the doctor's pen set down with some humor, and in the calm spirit with which a genuine philosopher receives prosperity as well as adversity. Yet one natural regret escaped him; that all this wealth, since it was to come, had not come a year or two sooner.

All at Beaurepaire knew what their dear old friend meant.

His other news to them was that they might expect him any moment.

So here was another cause of rejoicing.

"I am so glad," said Josephine. "Now, perhaps, he will be able to publish his poor dear entomology, that the booksellers were all so unkind, so unfeeling about."

I linger on the brink of painful scenes to observe that a sweet and loving friendship, such as this was between the good doctor and three persons of another sex, is one

of the best treasures of the human heart. Poverty had strengthened it; yet now wealth could not weaken it. With no tie of blood it yet was filial, sisterly, brotherly, national, chivalrous; happy, unalloyed sentiment, free from ups and downs, from heats and chills, from rivalry, from caprice; and, indeed, from all mortal accidents but one — and why say one? methinks death itself does but suspend these gentle, rare, unselfish amities a moment, then waft them upward to their abiding home.

CHAPTER XV.

It was a fair morning in June: the sky was a bright, deep, lovely, speckless blue: the flowers and bushes poured perfume, and sprinkled song upon the balmy air. On such a day, so calm, so warm, so bright, so scented, so tuneful, to live and to be young is to be happy. With gentle hand it wipes all other days out of the memory; it smiles, it smells, it sings, and clouds and rain and biting wind seem as far off and impossible as grief and trouble.

Camille and Josephine had stolen out, and strolled lazily up and down close under the house, drinking the sweet air, fragrant with perfume and melody; the blue sky, and love.

Rose was in the house. She had missed them; but she thought they must be near; for they seldom took long walks early in the day. Meeting Jacintha on the landing of the great staircase, she asked her where her sister was.

"Madame Raynal is gone for a walk. She has taken the colonel with her. You know she always takes the colonel out with her now."

"That will do. You can finish your work."

Jacintha went into Camille's room.

Rose, who had looked as grave as a judge while Jacintha was present, bubbled into laughter. She even repeated Jacintha's words aloud, and chuckled over them. "You know she always takes the colonel out with her now — ha, ha, ha!"

"Rose!" sighed a distant voice.

She looked round, and saw the baroness at some dis-

tance in the corridor, coming slowly towards her, with eyes bent gloomily on the ground. Rose composed her features into a settled gravity, and went to meet her.

"I wish to speak with you," said the baroness; "let us sit down; it is cool here."

Rose ran and brought a seat without a back, but well stuffed, and set it against the wall. The old lady sat down and leaned back, and looked at Rose in silence a good while; then she said, —

"There is room for you; sit down, for I want to speak seriously to you."

"Yes, mamma; what is it?"

"Turn a little round, and let me see your face."

Rose complied; and began to feel a little uneasy.

"Perhaps you can guess what I am going to say to you?"

"I have no idea."

"Well, I am going to put a question to you."

"With all my heart, dear mamma."

"I invite you to explain to me the most singular, the most unaccountable thing that ever fell under my notice. Will you do this for your mother?"

"O mamma! of course I will do anything to please you that I can; but, indeed, I don't know what you mean."

"I am going to tell you."

The old lady paused. The young one, naturally enough, felt a chill of vague anxiety strike across her frame.

"Rose," said the old lady, speaking very gently but firmly, and leaning in a peculiar way on her words, while her eye worked like an ice gimlet on her daughter's face, "a little while ago, when my poor Raynal — our benefactor — was alive — and I was happy — you all chilled my happiness by your gloom: the whole house seemed a house of mourning — tell me now why was this."

"Mamma!" said Rose, after a moment's hesitation, "we could hardly be gay. Sickness in the house! And if Colonel Raynal was alive, still he was absent, and in danger."

"Oh! then it was out of regard for him we were all dispirited?"

"Why, I suppose so," said Rose, stoutly; but then colored high at her own want of candor. However, she congratulated herself that her mother's suspicion was confined to past events.

Her self-congratulation on that score was short; for the baroness, after eying her grimly for a second or two in silence, put her this awkward question plump.

"If so, tell me why is it that ever since that black day when the news of his *death* reached us, the whole house has gone into black, and has gone out of mourning?"

"Mamma," stammered Rose, "what *do* you mean?"

"Even poor Camille, who was so pale and wan, has recovered like magic."

"O mamma! is not that fancy?" said Rose, piteously. "Of what do you suspect me? Can you think I am unfeeling — ungrateful? I should not be *your* daughter."

"No, no," said the baroness, "to do you justice, you attempt sorrow; as you put on black. But, my poor child, you do it with so little skill that one sees a horrible gayety breaking through that thin disguise: you are no true mourners: you are like the mutes or the undertakers at a funeral, forced grief on the surface of your faces, and frightful complacency below."

"Tra la! lal! la! la! Tra la! la! Tra la! la!" carolled Jacintha, in the colonel's room hard by.

The ladies looked at one another: Rose in great confusion.

"Tra la! la! la! Tra lal! lal! la! la! la!"

"Jacintha!" screamed Rose angrily.

"Hush! not a word," said the baroness. "Why remonstrate with *her?* Servants are but chameleons: they take the color of those they serve. Do not cry. I wanted your confidence, not your tears, love. There, I will not twice in one day ask you for your heart: it would be to lower the mother, and give the daughter the pain of refusing it, and the regret, sure to come one day, of having refused it. I will discover the meaning of it all by myself." She went away with a gentle sigh; and Rose was cut to the heart by her words; she resolved, whatever it might cost her and Josephine, to make a clean breast this very day. As she was one of those who act promptly, she went instantly in search of her sister, to gain her consent, if possible.

Now, the said Josephine was in the garden walking with Camille, and uttering a wife's tender solicitudes.

"And must you leave me? must you risk your life again so soon; the life on which mine depends?"

"My dear, that letter I received from headquarters two days ago, that inquiry whether my wound was cured. A hint, Josephine — a hint too broad for any soldier not to take."

"Camille, you are very proud," said Josephine, with an accent of reproach, and a look of approval.

"I am obliged to be. I am the husband of the proudest woman in France."

"Hush! not so loud: there is Dard on the grass."

"Dard!" muttered the soldier with a word of meaning. "Josephine," said he after a pause, and a little peevishly, "how much longer are we to lower our voices, and turn away our eyes from each other, and be ashamed of our happiness?"

"Five months longer, is it not?" answered Josephine quietly.

"Five months longer!"

Josephine was hurt at this, and for once was betrayed into a serious and merited remonstrance.

"Is this just?" said she. "Think of two months ago: yes, but two months ago, you were dying. You doubted my love, because it could not overcome my virtue and my gratitude: yet you might have seen it was destroying my life. Poor Raynal, my husband, my benefactor, died. Then I could do more for you, if not with delicacy, at least with honor; but no! words, and looks, and tender offices of love were not enough, I must give stronger proof. Dear Camille, I have been reared in a strict school: and perhaps none of your sex can know what it cost me to go to Frejus that day with him I love."

"My own Josephine!"

"I made but one condition: that you would not rob me of my mother's respect: to her our hasty marriage would appear monstrous, heartless. You consented to be secretly happy for six months. One fortnight has passed, and you are discontented again."

"Oh, no! do not think so. It is every word true. I am an ungrateful villain."

"How dare you say so? and to me! No! but you are a man."

"So I have been told; but my conduct to you, sweet one, has not been that of a man from first to last. Yet I could die for you, with a smile on my lips. But when I think that once I lifted this sacrilegious hand against your life — oh!"

"Do not be silly, Camille. I love you all the better for loving me well enough to kill me. What woman would not? I tell you, you foolish thing, you are a man: monseigneur is one of the lordly sex, that is accustomed to have everything its own way. My love, in a world that is full of misery, here are two that are

condemned to be secretly happy a few months longer: a hard fate for one of your sex, it seems: but it is so much sweeter than the usual lot of mine, that really I cannot share your misery," and she smiled joyously.

"Then share my happiness, my dear wife."

"I do; only mine is deep, not loud."

"Why, Dard is gone, and we are out of doors; will the little birds betray us?"

"The lower windows are open, and I saw Jacintha in one of the rooms."

"Jacintha? we are in awe of the very servants. Well, if I must not say it loud I will say it often," and putting his mouth to her ear, he poured a burning whisper of love into it — "My love! my angel! my wife! my wife! my wife!"

She turned her swimming eyes on him.

"My husband!" she whispered in return.

Rose came out, and found them billing and cooing. "You *must* not be so happy, you two," said she authoritatively.

"How can we help it?" asked Camille.

"You must and shall help it, somehow," retorted this little tyrant. "Mamma suspects. She has given me such a cross-examination, my blood runs cold. No, on second thoughts, kiss her again, and you may both be as happy as you like; for I am going to tell mamma all, and no power on earth shall hinder me."

"Rose," said Camille, "you are a sensible girl; and I always said so."

But Josephine was horrified. "What! tell my mother that within a month of my husband's death?" —

"Don't say your husband," put in Camille wincing; "the priest never confirmed that union; words spoken before a magistrate do not make a marriage in the sight of Heaven."

Josephine cut him short. "Amongst honorable men and women all oaths are alike sacred: and Heaven's eye is in a magistrate's room as in a church. A daughter of Beaurepaire gave her hand to him, and called herself his wife. Therefore, she was his wife: and is his widow. She owes him everything; the house you are all living in among the rest. She ought to be proud of her brief connection with that pure, heroic spirit, and, when she is so little noble as to disown him, then say that gratitude and justice have no longer a place among mankind."

"Come into the chapel," said Camille, with a voice that showed he was hurt.

They entered the chapel, and there they saw something that thoroughly surprised them: a marble monument to the memory of Raynal. It leaned at present against the wall below the place prepared to receive it. The inscription, short, but emphatic, and full of feeling, told of the battles he had fought in, including the last fatal skirmish, and his marriage with the heiress of Beaurepaire; and, in a few soldier-like words, the uprightness, simplicity, and generosity of his character.

They were so touched by this unexpected trait in Camille that they both threw their arms round his neck by one impulse. "Am I wrong to be proud of him?" said Josephine, triumphantly.

"Well, don't say too much to me," said Camille, looking down confused. "One tries to be good; but it is very hard — to some of us — not to you, Josephine; and, after all, it is only the truth that we have written on that stone. Poor Raynal! he was my old comrade; he saved me from death, and not a soldier's death — drowning; and he was a better man than I am, or ever shall be. Now he is dead, I can say these things. If I had said them when he was alive, it would have been more to my credit."

They all three went back towards the house; and on the way Rose told them all that had passed between the baroness and her. When she came to the actual details of that conversation, to the words, and looks, and tones, Josephine's uneasiness rose to an overpowering height; she even admitted that further concealment would be very difficult.

"Better tell her than let her find out," said Rose. "We must tell her some day."

At last, after a long and agitated discussion, Josephine consented; but Rose must be the one to tell. "So then, you at least will make your peace with mamma," argued Josephine, "and let us go in and do this before our courage fails; besides, it is going to rain, and it has turned cold. Where have all these clouds come from? An hour ago there was not one in the sky."

They went, with hesitating steps and guilty looks, to the saloon. Their mother was not there. Here was a reprieve.

Rose had an idea. She would take her to the chapel, and show her the monument, and that would please her with poor Camille. "After that," said Rose, "I will begin by telling her all the misery you have both gone through; and, when she pities you, then I will show her it was all my fault your misery ended in a secret marriage."

The confederates sat there in a chilly state, waiting for the baroness. At last, as she did not come, Rose got up to go to her. "When the mind is made up, it is no use being cowardly, and putting off," said she, firmly. For all that, her cheek had but little color left in it, when she left her chair with this resolve.

Now as Rose went down the long saloon to carry out their united resolve, Jacintha looked in; and, after a hasty glance to see who was present, she waited till

Rose came up to her, and then whipped a letter from under her apron and gave it her.

"For my mistress," said she, with an air of mystery.

"Why not take it to her, then?" inquired Rose.

"I thought you might like to see it first, mademoiselle," said Jacintha, with quiet meaning.

"Is it from the dear doctor?" asked Josephine.

"La, no, mademoiselle, don't you know the doctor is come home? Why, he has been in the house near an hour. He is with my lady."

The doctor proved Jacintha correct by entering the room in person soon after; on this Rose threw down the letter, and she and the whole party were instantly occupied in greeting him.

When the ladies had embraced him and Camille shaken hands with him, they plied him with a thousand questions. Indeed, he had not half satisfied their curiosity, when Rose happened to catch sight of the letter again, and took it up to carry to the baroness. She now, for the first time, eyed it attentively, and the consequence was she uttered an exclamation, and took the first opportunity to beckon Aubertin.

He came to her; and she put the letter into his hand.

He put up his glasses, and eyed it. "Yes!" whispered he, "it is from *him*."

Josephine and Camille saw something was going on; they joined the other two, with curiosity in their faces.

Rose put her hand on a small table near her, and leaned a moment. She turned half sick at a letter coming from the dead. Josephine now came towards her with a face of concern, and asked what was the matter.

The reply came from Aubertin. "My poor friends," said he, solemnly, "this is one of those fearful things that you have not seen in your short lives, but it has been more than once my lot to witness it. The ships

that carry letters from distant countries vary greatly in speed, and are subject to detaining accidents. Yes, this is the third time I have seen a letter come written by a hand known to be cold. The baroness is a little excited to-day, I don't know from what cause. With your approbation, Madame Raynal, I will read this letter before I let her see it."

"Read it, if you please."

"Shall I read it out?"

"Certainly. There may be some wish expressed in it; oh, I hope there is!"

Camille, from delicacy, retired to some little distance, and the doctor read the letter in a low and solemn voice.

"My dear Mother, — I hope all are well at Beaurepaire, as I am, or I hope soon to be. I received a wound in our last skirmish; not a very severe one; but it put an end to my writing for some time."

"Poor fellow! it was his death wound. Why, when was this written? — why," and the doctor paused, and seemed stupefied: "why, my dears, has my memory gone, or" — and again he looked eagerly at the letter — "what was the date of the battle in which he was killed? for this letter is dated the 15th of May. Is it a dream? no! this was written since the date of his death."

"No, doctor," said Rose, "you deceive yourself."

"Why, what was the date of the *Moniteur*, then?" asked Aubertin, in great agitation.

"Considerably later than this," said Camille.

"I don't think so; the journal! where is it?"

"My mother has it locked up. I'll run."

"No, Rose; no one but me. Now, Josephine, do not you go and give way to hopes that may be delusive. I

must see that journal directly. I will go to the baroness. I shall excuse her less than you would."

He was scarcely gone when a cry of horror filled the room, a cry as of madness falling like a thunderbolt on a human mind. It was Josephine, who up to this had not uttered one word. But now she stood, white as a corpse, in the middle of the room, and wrung her hands. "What have I done? What shall I do? It was the 3d of May. I see it before me in letters of fire; the 3d of May! the 3d of May! — and he writes the 15th."

"No! no!" cried Camille wildly. "It was long, long after the 3d."

"It was the 3d of May," repeated Josephine in a hoarse voice that none would have known for hers.

Camille ran to her with words of comfort and hope; he did not share her fears. He remembered about when the *Moniteur* came, though not the very day. He threw his arm lovingly round her as if to protect her against these shadowy terrors. Her dilating eyes seemed fixed on something distant in space or time, at some horrible thing coming slowly towards her. She did not see Camille approach her, but the moment she felt him she turned upon him swiftly.

"Do you love me?" still in the hoarse voice that had so little in it of Josephine. "I mean, does one grain of respect or virtue mingle in your love for me?"

"What words are these, my wife?"

"Then leave Raynal's house upon the instant. You wonder I can be so cruel? I wonder too; and that I can see my duty so clear in one short moment. But I have lived twenty years since that letter came. Oh! my brain has whirled through a thousand agonies. And I have come back a thousand times to the same thing; you and I must see each other's face no more."

"Oh!" cried Rose, "is there no way but this?"

"Take care," she screamed, wildly, to her and Camille, "I am on the verge of madness; is it for you two to thrust me over the precipice? Come, now, if you are a man of honor, if you have a spark of gratitude towards the poor woman who has given you all except her fair name — that she will take to the grave in spite of you all — promise that you will leave Raynal's house this minute if he is alive, and let me die in honor as I have lived."

"No, no!" cried Camille, terror-stricken; "it cannot be. Heaven is merciful, and Heaven sees how happy we are. Be calm! these are idle fears; be calm! I say. For if it is so I will obey you. I will stay; I will go; I will die; I will live; I will obey you."

"Swear this to me by the thing you hold most sacred," she almost shrieked.

"I swear by my love for you," was his touching reply.

Ere they had recovered a miserable composure after this passionate outburst, all the more terrible as coming from a creature so tender as Josephine, agitated voices were heard at the door, and the baroness tottered in, followed by the doctor, who was trying in vain to put some bounds to her emotion and her hopes.

"Oh, my children! my children!" cried she, trembling violently. "Here, Rose, my hands shake so; take this key, open the cabinet, there is the *Moniteur*. What is the date?"

The journal was found, and rapidly examined. The date was the 20th of May.

"There!" cried Camille. "I told you!"

The baroness uttered a feeble moan. Her hopes died as suddenly as they had been born, and she sank drooping into a chair, with a bitter sigh.

Camille stole a joyful look at Josephine. She was in the same attitude looking straight before her as at a coming horror. Presently Rose uttered a faint cry, "The battle was *before*."

"To be sure," cried the doctor. "You forget, it is not the date of the paper we want, but of the battle it records. For Heaven's sake, when was the battle?"

"The 3d of May," said Josephine, in a voice that seemed to come from the tomb.

Rose's hands that held the journal fell like a dead weight upon her knees, journal and all. She whispered, "It was the 3d of May."

"Ah!" cried the baroness, starting up, "he may yet be alive. He must be alive. Heaven is merciful! Heaven would not take my son from me, a poor old woman who has not long to live. There was a letter; where is the letter?"

"Are we mad, not to read the letter?" said the doctor. "I had it; it has dropped from my old fingers when I went for the journal."

A short examination of the room showed the letter lying crumpled up near the door. Camille gave it to the baroness. She tried to read it, but could not.

"I am old," said she; "my hand shakes and my eyes are troubled. This young gentleman will read it to us. His eyes are not dim and troubled. Something tells me that when *I* hear this letter, I shall find out whether my son lives. Why do you not read it to me, Camille?" cried she, almost fiercely.

Camille, thus pressed, obeyed mechanically, and began to read Raynal's letter aloud, scarce knowing what he did, but urged and driven by the baroness.

"My dear Mother, — I hope all are well at Beaurepaire, as I am, or I hope soon to be. I received a wound in our last skirmish; not a very severe one, but it put an end to my writing for some time."

"Go on, dear Camille! go on."

"The page ends there, madame."

The paper was thin, and Camille, whose hand trembled, had some difficulty in detaching the leaves from one another. He succeeded, however, at last, and went on reading and writhing.

"By the way, you must address your next letter to me as Colonel Raynal. I was promoted just before this last affair, but had not time to tell you; and my wound stopped my writing till now."

"There, there!" cried the baroness. "He was Colonel Raynal, and Colonel Raynal was not killed."

The doctor implored her not to interrupt.

"Go on, Camille. Why do you hesitate? what is the matter? Do for pity's sake go on, sir."

Camille cast a look of agony around, and put his hand to his brow, on which large drops of cold perspiration, like a death dew, were gathering; but driven to the stake on all sides, he gasped on rather than read, for his eye had gone down the page.

"A namesake of mine, Commandant Raynal,"—

"Ah!"

"has not been — so fortunate. He"—

"Go on! go on!"

The wretched man could now scarcely utter Raynal's words; they came from him in a choking groan.

"he was killed, poor fellow! while heading a gallant charge upon the enemy's flank."

He ground the letter convulsively in his hand, then it fell all crumpled on the floor.

"Bless you, Camille!" cried the baroness, "bless you! bless you! I have a son still."

She stooped with difficulty, took up the letter, and,

kissing it again and again, fell on her knees, and thanked Heaven aloud before them all. Then she rose and went hastily out, and her voice was heard crying very loud, "Jacintha! Jacintha!"

The doctor followed in considerable anxiety for the effects of this violent joy on so aged a person. Three remained behind, panting and pale like those to whom dead Lazarus burst the tomb, and came forth in a moment, at a word. Then Camille half kneeled, half fell, at Josephine's feet, and, in a voice choked with sobs, bade her dispose of him.

She turned her head away. "Do not speak to me; do not look at me; if we look at one another, we are lost. Go! die at your post, and I at mine."

He bowed his head, and kissed her dress, then rose calm as despair, and white as death, and, with his knees knocking under him, tottered away like a corpse set moving.

He disappeared from the house.

The baroness soon came back, triumphant and gay.

"I have sent her to bid them ring the bells in the village. The poor shall be feasted; all shall share our joy: my son was dead, and lives. Oh, joy! joy! joy!"

"Mother!" shrieked Josephine.

"Mad woman that I am, I am too boisterous. Help me, Rose! she is going to faint; her lips are white."

Dr. Aubertin and Rose brought a chair. They forced Josephine into it. She was not the least faint; yet her body obeyed their hands just like a dead body. The baroness melted into tears; tears streamed from Rose's eyes. Josephine's were dry and stony, and fixed on coming horror. The baroness looked at her with anxiety. "Thoughtless old woman! It was too sudden; it is too much for my dear child; too much for me," and she kneeled, and laid her aged head on her daughter's bosom,

saying feebly through her tears, "too much joy, too much joy!"

Josephine took no notice of her. She sat like one turned to stone looking far away over her mother's head with rigid eyes fixed on the air and on coming horrors.

Rose felt her arm seized. It was Aubertin. He too was pale now, though not before. He spoke in a terrible whisper to Rose, his eye fixed on the woman of stone that sat there.

"Is THIS JOY?"

Rose, by a mighty effort, raised her eyes and confronted his full. "What else should it be?" said she.

And with these words this Spartan girl was her sister's champion once more against all comers, friend or foe.

CHAPTER XVI.

Dr. Aubertin received one day a note from a publishing bookseller, to inquire whether he still thought of giving the world his valuable work on insects. The doctor was amazed. "My valuable work! Why, Rose, they all refused it, and this person in particular recoiled from it as if my insects could sting on paper."

The above led to a correspondence, in which the convert to insects explained that the work must be published at the author's expense, the publisher contenting himself with the profits. The author, thirsting for the public, consented. Then the publisher wrote again to say that the immortal treatise must be spiced; a little politics flung in: "Nothing goes down, else." The author answered in some heat that he would not dilute things everlasting with the fleeting topics of the day, nor defile science with politics. On this his Mentor smoothed him down, despising him secretly for not seeing that a book is a matter of trade and nothing else. It ended in Aubertin going to Paris to hatch his Phœnix. He had not been there a week, when a small deputation called on him, and informed him he had been elected honorary member of a certain scientific society. The compliment was followed by others, till at last certain ladies, with the pliancy of their sex, find out they had always secretly cared for butterflies. Then the naturalist smelt a rat, or, in other words, began to scent that entomology, a form of idiocy in a poor man, is a graceful decoration of the intellect in a rich one.

Philosopher without bile, he saw through this, and let

it amuse, not shock him. His own species, a singularly interesting one in my opinion, had another trait in reserve for him.

He took a world of trouble to find out the circumstances of his nephew's nephews and nieces: then he made arrangements for distributing a large part of his legacy among them. His intentions and the proportions of his generosity transpired.

Hitherto they had been silent, but now they all fell-to and abused him: each looking only to the amount of his individual share, not at the sum total the doctor was giving way to an ungrateful lot.

The donor was greatly amused, and noted down the incident and some of the remarks in his commonplace book, under the general head of "Bestiarium;" and the particular head of "Homo."

Paris with its seductions netted the good doctor, and held him two or three months; would have detained him longer, but for alarming accounts the baroness sent of Josephine's health. These determined him to return to Beaurepaire; and, must I own it, the announcement was no longer hailed at Beaurepaire with universal joy as heretofore.

Josephine Raynal, late Dujardin, is by this time no stranger to my intelligent reader. I wish him to bring his knowledge of her character and her sensibility to my aid. Imagine, as the weary hours and days and weeks roll over her head, what this loving woman feels for her lover whom she has dismissed; what this grateful wife feels for the benefactor she has unwittingly wronged; but will never wrong with her eyes open; what this lady pure as snow, and proud as fire, feels at the seeming frailty into which a cruel combination of circumstances has entrapped her.

Put down the book a moment: shut your eyes: and imagine this strange and complicated form of human suffering.

Her mental sufferings were terrible; and for some time Rose feared for her reason. At last her agonies subsided into a listlessness and apathy little less alarming. She seemed a creature descending inch by inch into the tomb. Indeed, I fully believe she would have died of despair: but one of nature's greatest forces stepped into the arena and fought on the side of life. She was affected with certain bilious symptoms that added to Rose's uneasiness, but Jacintha assured her it was nothing, and would retire and leave the sufferer better. Jacintha, indeed, seemed now to take a particular interest in Josephine, and was always about her with looks of pity and interest.

"Good creature!" thought Rose, "she sees my sister is unhappy: and that makes her more attentive and devoted to her than ever."

One day these three were together in Josephine's room. Josephine was mechanically combing her long hair, when all of a sudden she stretched out her hand and cried, "Rose!"

Rose ran to her, and coming behind her saw in the glass that her lips were colorless. She screamed to Jacintha, and between them they supported Josephine to the bed. She had hardly touched it when she fainted dead away. "Mamma! mamma!" cried Rose in her terror.

"Hush!" cried Jacintha roughly, "hold your tongue: it is only a faint. Help me loosen her: don't make any noise, whatever." They loosened her stays, and applied the usual remedies, but it was some time before she came-to. At last the color came back to her lips, then to her cheek, and the light to her eye. She smiled feebly

on Jacintha and Rose, and asked if she had not been insensible.

"Yes, love, and frightened us — a little — not much — oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Don't be alarmed, sweet one, I am better. And I will never do it again, since it frightens you." Then Josephine said to her sister in a low voice, and in the Italian language, "I hoped it was death, my sister; but he comes not to the wretched."

"If you hoped that," replied Rose in the same language, "you do not love your poor sister who so loves you."

While the Italian was going on, Jacintha's dark eyes glanced suspiciously on each speaker in turn. But her suspicions were all wide of the mark.

"Now may I go and tell mamma?" asked Rose.

"No, mademoiselle, you shall not," said Jacintha. "Madame Raynal, do take my side, and forbid her."

"Why, what is it to you?" said Rose, haughtily.

"If it was not something to me, should I thwart my dear young lady?"

"No. And you shall have your own way, if you will but condescend to give me a reason."

This to some of us might appear reasonable, but not to Jacintha: it even hurt her feelings.

"Mademoiselle Rose," she said, "when you were little and used to ask me for anything, did I ever say to you, 'Give me a *reason* first'?"

"There! she is right," said Josephine. "We should not make terms with tried friends. Come, we will pay her devotion this compliment. It is such a small favor. For my part I feel obliged to her for asking it."

Josephine's health improved steadily from that day. Her hollow cheeks recovered their plump smoothness, and her beauty its bloom, and her person grew more

noble and statue-like than ever, and within she felt a sense of indomitable vitality. Her appetite had for some time been excessively feeble and uncertain, and her food tasteless; but of late, by what she conceived to be a reaction such as is common after youth has shaken off a long sickness, her appetite had been not only healthy but eager. The baroness observed this, and it relieved her of a large portion of her anxiety. One day at dinner her maternal heart was so pleased with Josephine's performance that she took it as a personal favor. "Well done, Josephine," said she; "that gives your mother pleasure to see you eat again. Soup and bouillon: and now twice you have been to Rose for some of that *pâté*, which does you so much credit, Jacintha."

Josephine colored high at this compliment.

"It is true," said she, "I eat like a pig;" and, with a furtive glance at the said *pâté*, she laid down her knife and fork, and ate no more of anything. The baroness had now a droll misgiving.

"The doctor will be angry with me," said she: "he will find her as well as ever."

"Madame," said Jacintha hastily, "when does the doctor come, if I may make so bold, that I may get his room ready, you know?"

"Well thought of, Jacintha. He comes the day after to-morrow, in the afternoon."

At night when the young ladies went up to bed, what did they find but a little cloth laid on a little table in Josephine's room, and the remains of the *pâté* she had liked. Rose burst out laughing. "Look at that dear duck of a goose, Jacintha! Our mother's flattery sank deep: she thinks we can eat her *pâtés* at all hours of the day and night. Shall I send it away?"

"No," said Josephine, "that would hurt her culinary pride, and perhaps her affection: only cover it up, dear,

for just now I am not in the humor: it rather turns me."

It was covered up. The sisters retired to rest. In the morning Rose lifted the cover and found the plate cleared, polished. She was astounded.

The large tapestried chamber, once occupied by Camille Dujardin, was now turned into a sitting-room, and it was a favorite on account of the beautiful view from the windows.

One day Josephine sat there alone with some work in her hand; but the needle often stopped, and the fair head drooped. She heaved a deep sigh. To her surprise it was echoed by a sigh that, like her own, seemed to come from a heart full of sighs.

She turned hastily round and saw Jacintha.

Now Josephine had all a woman's eye for reading faces, and she was instantly struck by a certain gravity in Jacintha's gaze, and a flutter which the young woman was suppressing with tolerable but not complete success.

Disguising the uneasiness this discovery gave her, she looked her visitor full in the face, and said mildly, but a little coldly, "Well, Jacintha?"

Jacintha lowered her eyes and muttered slowly, —

"The doctor — comes — to-day," then raised her eyes all in a moment to take Josephine off her guard; but the calm face was impenetrable. So then Jacintha added, "to our misfortune," throwing in still more meaning.

"To our misfortune? A dear old friend — like him?"

Jacintha explained. "That old man makes me shake. You are never safe with him. So long as his head is in the clouds, you might take his shoes off, and on he'd walk and never know it; but every now and then he comes out of the clouds all in one moment, without a word of warning, and when he does his eye is on every-

thing, like a bird's. Then he is so old: he has seen a heap. Take my word for it, the old are more knowing than the young, let them be as sharp as you like: the old have seen everything. *We* have only heard talk of the most part, with here and there a glimpse. To know life to the bottom you must live it out, from the soup to the dessert; and that is what the doctor has done, and now he is coming here. And Mademoiselle Rose will go telling him everything; and if she tells him half what she has seen, your secret will be no secret to that old man."

"My secret!" gasped Josephine, turning pale.

"Don't look so, madame: don't be frightened at poor Jacintha. Sooner or later you *must* trust somebody besides Mademoiselle Rose."

Josephine looked at her with inquiring, frightened eyes.

Jacintha drew nearer to her.

"Mademoiselle, — I beg pardon, madame, — I carried you in my arms when I was a child. When I was a girl you toddled at my side, and held my gown, and lisped my name, and used to put your little arms round my neck, and kissed me, you would; and if ever I had the least pain or sickness your dear little face would turn as sorrowful, and all the pretty color leave it for Jacintha; and now you are in trouble, in sore trouble, yet you turn away from me, you dare not trust me, that would be cut in pieces ere I would betray you. Ah, mademoiselle, you are wrong. The poor can feel: they have all seen trouble, and a servant is the best of friends where she has the heart to love her mistress; and do not I love you? Pray do not turn from her who has carried you in her arms, and laid you to sleep upon her bosom, many's and many's the time."

Josephine panted audibly. She held out her hand

eloquently to Jacintha, but she turned her head away and trembled.

Jacintha cast a hasty glance round the room. Then she trembled too at what she was going to say, and the effect it might have on the young lady. As for Josephine, terrible as the conversation had become, she made no attempt to evade it: she remained perfectly passive. It was the best way to learn how far Jacintha had penetrated her secret, if at all.

Jacintha looked fearfully round and whispered in Josephine's ear, "When the news of Colonel Raynal's death came, you wept, but the color came back to your cheek. When the news of his life came, you turned to stone. Ah! my poor young lady, there has been more between you and *that man* than should be. Ever since one day you all went to Frejus together, you were a changed woman. I have seen you look at him as — as a wife looks at her man. I have seen *him*" —

"Hush, Jacintha! Do not tell me what you have seen: oh! do not remind me of joys I pray God to help me forget. He was my husband, then! — oh, cruel Jacintha, to remind me of what I have been, of what I am! Ah me! ah me! ah me!"

"Your husband!" cried Jacintha in utter amazement.

Then Josephine drooped her head on this faithful creature's shoulder, and told her with many sobs the story I have told you. She told it very briefly, for it was to a woman who, though little educated, was full of feeling and shrewdness, and needed but the bare facts: she could add the rest from her own heart and experience: could tell the storm of feelings through which these two unhappy lovers must have passed. Her frequent sighs of pity and sympathy drew Josephine on to pour out all her griefs. When the tale was ended she gave a sigh of relief.

"It might have been worse: I thought it was worse; the more fool I. I deserve to have my head cut off." This was Jacintha's only comment at that time.

It was Josephine's turn to be amazed. "It could have been worse?" said she. "How? tell me," added she bitterly. "It would be a consolation to me, could I see that."

Jacintha colored and evaded this question, and begged her to go on, to keep nothing back from her. Josephine assured her she had revealed all. Jacintha looked at her a moment in silence.

"It is then as I half suspected. You do not know all that is before you. You do not see why I am afraid of that old man."

"No, not of him in particular."

"Nor why I want to keep Mademoiselle Rose from prattling to him?"

"No. I assure you Rose is to be trusted; she is wise — wiser than I am."

"You are neither of you wise. You neither of you know anything. My poor young mistress, you are but a child still. You have a deep water to wade through," said Jacintha, so solemnly that Josephine trembled. "A deep water, and do not see it even. You have told me what is past, now I must tell you what is coming. Heaven help me! But is it possible you have no misgiving? Tell the truth, now."

"Alas! I am full of them; at your words, at your manner, they fly around me in crowds."

"Have you no *one?*"

"No."

"Then turn your head from me a bit, my sweet young lady; I am an honest woman, though I am not so innocent as you, and I am forced against my will to speak my mind plainer than I am used to."

Then followed a conversation, to detail which might anticipate our story; suffice it to say, that Rose, coming into the room rather suddenly, found her sister weeping on Jacintha's bosom, and Jacintha crying and sobbing over her.

She stood and stared in utter amazement.

Dr. Aubertin, on his arrival, was agreeably surprised at Madame Raynal's appearance. He inquired after her appetite.

"Oh, as to her appetite," cried the baroness, "that is immense."

"Indeed!"

"It was," explained Josephine, "just when I began to get better, but now it is as much as usual." This answer had been arranged beforehand by Jacintha. She added, "The fact is, we wanted to see you, doctor, and my ridiculous ailments were a good excuse for tearing you from Paris." — "And now we have succeeded," said Rose, "let us throw off the mask, and talk of other things; above all, of Paris, and your *éclat*."

"For all that," persisted the baroness, "she was ill, when I first wrote, and very ill too."

"Madame Raynal," said the doctor solemnly, "your conduct has been irregular; once ill, and your illness announced to your medical adviser, etiquette forbade you to get well but by his prescriptions. Since, then, you have shown yourself unfit to conduct a malady, it becomes my painful duty to forbid you henceforth ever to be ill at all, without my permission first obtained in writing."

This badinage was greatly relished by Rose, but not at all by the baroness, who was as humorless as a swan.

He stayed a month at Beaurepaire, then off to Paris again: and being now a rich man, and not too old to

enjoy innocent pleasures, he got a habit of running backwards and forwards between the two places, spending a month or so at each alternately. So the days rolled on. Josephine fell into a state that almost defies description; her heart was full of deadly wounds, yet it seemed, by some mysterious, half-healing balm, to throb and ache, but bleed no more. Beams of strange, unreasonable complacency would shoot across her; the next moment reflection would come, she would droop her head, and sigh piteously. Then all would merge in a wild terror of detection. She seemed on the borders of a river of bliss, new, divine, and inexhaustible: and on the other bank mocking malignant fiends dared her to enter that heavenly stream. The past to her was full of regrets; the future full of terrors, and empty of hope. Yet she did not, could not succumb. Instead of the listlessness and languor of a few months back, she had now more energy than ever; at times it mounted to irritation. An activity possessed her: it broke out in many feminine ways. Among the rest she was seized with what we men call a cacoethes of the needle: "a raging desire" for work. Her fingers itched for work. She was at it all day. As devotees retire to pray, so she to stitch. On a wet day she would often slip into the kitchen, and ply the needle beside Jacintha: on a dry day she would hide in the old oak-tree, and sit like a mouse, and ply the tools of her craft, and make things of no mortal use to man or woman; and she tried little fringes of muslin upon her white hand, and held it up in front of her, and smiled, and then moaned. It was winter, and Rose used sometimes to bring her out a thick shawl, as she sat in the old oak-tree stitching, but Josephine nearly always declined it. *She was nearly impervious to cold.*

Then, her purse being better filled than formerly, she

visited the poor more than ever, and above all the young couples; and took a warm interest in their household matters, and gave them muslin articles of her own making, and sometimes sniffed the soup in a young housewife's pot, and took a fancy to it, and, if invited to taste it, paid her the compliment of eating a good plateful of it, and said it was much better soup than the château produced, and, what is stranger, thought so: and, whenever some peevish little brat set up a yell in its cradle, and the father naturally enough shook his fist at the destroyer of his peace, Madame Raynal's lovely face filled with concern not for the sufferer but the pest, and she flew to it and rocked it and coaxed it and consoled it, till the young housewife smiled and stopped its mouth by other means. And, besides the five-franc pieces she gave the infants to hold, these visits of Madame Raynal were always followed by one from Jacintha with a basket of provisions on her stalwart arm, and honest Sir John Burgoyne peeping out at the corner. Kind and beneficent as she was, her temper deteriorated considerably, for it came down from angelic to human. Rose and Jacintha were struck with the change, assented to everything she said, and encouraged her in everything it pleased her caprice to do. Meantime the baroness lived on her son Raynal's letters (they came regularly twice a month). Rose too had a correspondence, a constant source of delight to her. Edouard Riviere was posted at a distance, and could not visit her; but their love advanced rapidly. Every day he wrote down for his Rose the acts of the day, and twice a week sent the budget to his sweetheart, and told her at the same time every feeling of his heart. She was less fortunate than he; she had to carry a heavy secret; but still she found plenty to tell him, and tender feelings too to vent on him in her own arch, shy, fitful way. Letters can enchain

hearts; it was by letters that these two found themselves imperceptibly betrothed. Their union was looked forward to as certain, and not very distant. Rose was fairly in love.

One day, Dr. Aubertin, coming back from Paris to Beaurepaire rather suddenly, found nobody at home but the baroness. Josephine and Rose were gone to Frejus; had been there more than a week. She was ailing again; so as Frejus had agreed with her once, Rose thought it might again. "She would send for them back directly."

"No," said the doctor, "why do that? I will go over there and see them." Accordingly, a day or two after this, he hired a carriage, and went off early in the morning to Frejus. In so small a place he expected to find the young ladies at once; but, to his surprise, no one knew them nor had heard of them. He was at a nonplus, and just about to return home and laugh at himself and the baroness for this wild-goose chase, when he fell in with a face he knew, one Mivart, a surgeon, a young man of some talent, who had made his acquaintance in Paris. Mivart accosted him with great respect; and, after the first compliments, informed him that he had been settled some months in this little town, and was doing a fair stroke of business.

"Killing some, and letting nature cure others, eh?" said the doctor; then, having had his joke, he told Mivart what had brought him to Frejus.

"Are they pretty women, your friends? I think I know all the pretty women about," said Mivart with levity. "They are not pretty," replied Aubertin. Mivart's interest in them faded visibly out of his countenance. "But they are beautiful. The elder might pass for Venus, and the younger for Hebe."

"I know them then!" cried he; "they are patients of mine."

The doctor colored. "Ah, indeed!"

"In the absence of your greater skill," said Mivart, politely; "it is Madame Aubertin and her sister you are looking for, is it not?"

Aubertin groaned. "I am rather too old to be looking for a Madame Aubertin," said he; "no; it is Madame Raynal, and Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire."

Mivart became confidential. "Madame Aubertin and her sister," said he, "are so lovely they make me ill to look at them: the deepest blue eyes you ever saw, both of them; high foreheads; teeth like ivory mixed with pearl; such aristocratic feet and hands; and their arms —oh!" and by way of general summary the young surgeon kissed the tips of his fingers, and was silent; language succumbed under the theme. The doctor smiled coldly.

Mivart added, "If you had come an hour sooner, you might have seen Mademoiselle Rose; she was in the town."

"Mademoiselle Rose? who is that?"

"Why, Madame Aubertin's sister."

At this Dr. Aubertin looked first very puzzled, then very grave.

"Hum!" said he, after a little reflection, "where do these paragons live?"

"They lodge at a small farm; it belongs to a widow; her name is Roth." They parted. Dr. Aubertin walked slowly towards his carriage, his hands behind him, his eyes on the ground. He bade the driver inquire where the Widow Roth lived, and learned it was about half a league out of the town. He drove to the farmhouse; when the carriage drove up, a young lady looked out of the window on the first floor. It was Rose de Beaurepaire. She caught the doctor's eye, and he hers. She came down and welcomed him with a great appearance

of cordiality, and asked him, with a smile, how he found them out.

"From your medical attendant," said the doctor, dryly.

Rose looked keenly in his face.

"He said he was in attendance on two paragons of beauty, blue eyes, white teeth and arms."

"And you found us out by that?" inquired Rose, looking still more keenly at him.

"Hardly; but it was my last chance of finding you, so I came. Where is Madame Raynal?"

"Come into this room, dear friend. I will go and find her."

Full twenty minutes was the doctor kept waiting, and then in came Rose, gayly crying, "I have hunted her high and low, and where do you think my lady was? sitting out in the garden — come."

Sure enough, they found Josephine in the garden, seated on a low chair. She smiled when the doctor came up to her, and asked after her mother. There was an air of languor about her; her color was clear, delicate, and beautiful.

"You have been unwell, my child."

"A little, dear friend; you know me; always ailing, and tormenting those I love."

"Well! but, Josephine, you know this place and this sweet air always set you up. Look at her now, doctor; did you ever see her look better? See what a color. I never saw her look more lovely."

"I never saw her look *so* lovely; but I have seen her look better. Your pulse. A little languid?"

"Yes, I am a little."

"Do you stay at Beaurepaire?" inquired Rose; "if so, we will come home."

"On the contrary, you will stay here another fortnight," said the doctor, authoritatively.

"Prescribe some of your nice tonics for me, doctor," said Josephine, coaxingly.

"No! I can't do that; you are in the hands of another practitioner."

"What does that matter? You were at Paris."

"It is not the etiquette in our profession to interfere with another man's patients."

"Oh, dear! I am so sorry," began Josephine.

"I see nothing here that my good friend Mivart is not competent to deal with," said the doctor, coldly.

Then followed some general conversation, at the end of which the doctor once more laid his commands on them to stay another fortnight where they were, and bade them good-by.

He was no sooner gone than Rose went to the door of the kitchen, and called out, "Madame Jouvenel! Madame Jouvenel! you may come into the garden again."

The doctor drove away; but, instead of going straight to Beaurepaire, he ordered the driver to return to the town. He then walked to Mivart's house.

In about a quarter of an hour he came out of it, looking singularly grave, sad, and stern.

CHAPTER XVII.

Edouard Riviere contrived one Saturday to work off all arrears of business, and start for Beaurepaire. He had received a very kind letter from Rose, and his longing to see her overpowered him. On the road his eyes often glittered, and his cheek flushed with expectation. At last he got there. His heart beat: for four months he had not seen her. He ran up into the drawing-room, and there found the baroness alone; she welcomed him cordially, but soon let him know Rose and her sister were at Frejus. His heart sank. Frejus was a long way off. But this was not all. Rose's last letter was dated from Beaurepaire, yet it must have been written at Frejus. He went to Jacintha, and demanded an explanation of this. The ready Jacintha said it looked as if she meant to be home directly; and added, with cool cunning, "That is a hint for me to get their rooms ready."

"This letter must have come here enclosed in another," said Edouard, sternly.

"Like enough," replied Jacintha, with an appearance of sovereign indifference.

Edouard looked at her, and said, grimly, "I will go to Frejus."

"So I would," said Jacintha, faltering a little, but not perceptibly; "you might meet them on the road, if so be they come the same road; there are two roads, you know."

Edouard hesitated; but he ended by sending Dard to the town on his own horse, with orders to leave him at

the inn, and borrow a fresh horse. "I shall just have time," said he. He rode to Frejus, and inquired at the inns and post-office for Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire. They did not know her; then he inquired for Madame Raynal. No such name known. He rode by the sea-side upon the chance of their seeing him. He paraded on horseback throughout the place, in hopes every moment that a window would open, and a fair face shine at it, and call him. At last his time was up, and he was obliged to ride back, sick at heart, to Beaurepaire. He told the baroness, with some natural irritation, what had happened. She was as much surprised as he was.

"I write to Madame Raynal at the post-office, Frejus," said she.

"And Madame Raynal gets your letters?"

"Of course she does, since she answers them; you cannot have inquired at the post."

"Why, it was the first place I inquired at, and neither Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire nor Madame Raynal were known there."

Jacintha, who could have given the clew, seemed so puzzled herself, that they did not even apply to her. Edouard took a sorrowful leave of the baroness, and set out on his journey home.

Oh! how sad and weary that ride seemed now by what it had been coming. His disappointment was deep and irritating; and ere he had ridden half way a torturer fastened on his heart. That torture is suspicion; a vague and shadowy, but gigantic phantom that oppresses and rends the mind more terribly than certainty. In this state of vague, sickening suspicion, he remained some days: then came an affectionate letter from Rose, who had actually returned home. In this she expressed her regret and disappointment at having missed him; blamed herself for misleading him, but

explained that their stay at Frejus had been prolonged from day to day far beyond her expectation. "The stupidity of the post-office was more than she could account for," said she. But, what went farthest to console Edouard, was, that after this *contretemps* she never ceased to invite him to come to Beaurepaire. Now, before this, though she said many kind and pretty things in her letters, she had never invited him to visit the château; he had noticed this. "Sweet soul," thought he, "she really is vexed. I must be a brute to think any more about it. Still" —

So this wound was skinned over.

At last, what he called his lucky star ordained that he should be transferred to the very post his Commandant Raynal had once occupied. He sought and obtained permission to fix his quarters in the little village near Beaurepaire, and though this plan could not be carried out for three months, yet the prospect of it was joyful all that time — joyful to both lovers. Rose needed this consolation, for she was very unhappy: her beloved sister, since their return from Frejus, had gone back. The flush of health was faded, and so was her late energy. She fell into deep depression and languor, broken occasionally by fits of nervous irritation.

She would sit for hours together at one window languishing and fretting. Can the female reader guess which way that window looked?

Now, Edouard was a favorite of Josephine's; so Rose hoped he would help to distract her attention from those sorrows which a lapse of years alone could cure.

On every account, then, his visit was looked forward to with hope and joy.

He came. He was received with open arms. He took up his quarters at his old lodgings, but spent his evenings and every leisure hour at the château.

He was very much in love, and showed it. He adhered to Rose like a leech, and followed her about like a little dog.

This would have made her very happy if there had been nothing great to distract her attention and her heart; but she had Josephine, whose deep depression and fits of irritation and terror filled her with anxiety; and so Edouard was in the way now and then. On these occasions he was too vain to see what she was too polite to show him offensively.

But on this she became vexed at his obtuseness.

"Does he think I can be always at his beck and call?" thought she.

"She is always after her sister," said he.

He was just beginning to be jealous of Josephine when the following incident occurred: —

Rose and the doctor were discussing Josephine. Edouard pretended to be reading a book, but he listened to every word.

Dr. Aubertin gave it as his opinion that Madame Raynal did not make enough blood.

"Oh! if I thought that!" cried Rose.

"Well, then, it is so, I assure you."

"Doctor," said Rose, "do you remember, one day you said healthy blood could be drawn from robust veins and poured into a sick person's?"

"It is a well-known fact," said Aubertin.

"I don't believe it," said Rose, dryly.

"Then you place a very narrow limit to science," said the doctor, coldly.

"Did you ever see it done?" asked Rose, slyly.

"I have not only seen it done, but have done it myself."

"Then do it for us. There's my arm; take blood from that for dear Josephine!" and she thrust a white arm

out under his eye with such a bold movement and such a look of fire and love as never beamed from common eyes.

A keen, cold pang shot through the human heart of Edouard Riviere.

The doctor started and gazed at her with admiration: then he hung his head. "I could not do it. I love you both too well to drain either of life's current."

Rose veiled her fire, and began to coax. "Once a week; just once a week, dear, dear doctor; you know I should never miss it. I am so full of that health, which Heaven denies to her I love."

"Let us try milder measures first," said the doctor. "I have most faith in time."

"What if I were to take her to Frejus? hitherto, the sea has always done wonders for her."

"Frejus, by all means," said Edouard, mingling suddenly in the conversation; "and this time I will go with you, and then I shall find out where you lodged before, and how the boobies came to say they did not know you."

Rose bit her lip. She could not help seeing then how much dear Edouard was in her way and Josephine's. Their best friends are in the way of all who have secrets. Presently the doctor went to his study. Then Edouard let fall a mock soliloquy. "I wonder," said he, dropping out his words one by one, "whether any one will ever love me well enough to give a drop of their blood for me."

"If you were in sickness and sorrow, who knows?" said Rose, coloring up.

"I would soon be in sickness and sorrow if I thought that."

"Don't jest with such matters, monsieur."

"I am serious. I wish I was as ill as Madame Raynal is, to be loved as she is."

"You must resemble her in some other things to be loved as she is."

"You have often made me feel that of late, dear Rose."

This touched her. But she fought down the kindly feeling. "I am glad of it," said she, out of perverseness. She added after a while, "Edouard, you are naturally jealous."

"Not the least in the world, Rose, I assure you. I have many faults, but jealous I am not."

"Oh, yes, you are, and suspicious, too; there is something in your character that alarms me for our happiness."

"Well, if you come to that, there are things in *your* conduct I could wish explained."

"There! I said so. You have not confidence in me."

"Pray don't say that, dear Rose. I have every confidence in you; only please don't ask me to divest myself of my senses and my reason."

"I don't ask you to do that or anything else for me; good-by, for the present."

"Where are you going now? tic! tic! I never can get a word in peace with you."

"I am not going to commit murder. I'm only going up-stairs to my sister."

"Poor Madame Raynal, she makes it very hard for me not to dislike her."

"Dislike my Josephine?" and Rose bristled visibly.

"She is an angel, but I should hate an angel if it came forever between you and me."

"Excuse me, she was here long before you. It is you that came between her and me."

"I came because I was told I should be welcome," said Edouard bitterly, and equivocating a little; he added, "and I dare say I shall go when I am told I am one too many."

"Bad heart! who says you are one too many in the house? But you are too exigent, monsieur; you assume the husband, and you tease me. It is selfish; can you not see I am anxious and worried? you ought to be kind to me, and soothe me; that is what I look for from you, and, instead of that, I declare you are getting to be quite a worry."

"I should not be if you loved me as I love you. I give *you* no rival. Shall I tell you the cause of all this? you have secrets."

"What secrets?"

"Is it me you ask? am I trusted with them? Secrets are a bond that not even love can overcome. It is to talk secrets you run away from me to Madame Raynal. Where did you lodge at Frejus, Mademoiselle the Reticent?"

"In a grotto, dry at low water, Monsieur the Inquisitive."

"That is enough: since you will not tell me, I will find it out before I am a week older."

This alarmed Rose terribly, and drove her to extremities. She decided to quarrel.

"Sir," said she, "I thank you for playing the tyrant a little prematurely; it has put me on my guard. Let us part; you and I are not suited to each other, Edouard Riviere."

He took this more humbly than she expected. "Part!" said he, in consternation; "that is a terrible word to pass between you and me. Forgive me! I suppose I am jealous."

"You are; you are actually jealous of my sister. Well, I tell you plainly I love you, but I love my sister better. I never could love any man as I do her; it is ridiculous to expect such a thing."

"And do you think I could bear to play second fiddle to her all my life?"

"I don't ask you. Go and play first trumpet to some other lady."

"You speak your wishes so plainly now, I have nothing to do but to obey."

He kissed her hand and went away disconsolately.

Rose, instead of going to Josephine, her determination to do which had mainly caused the quarrel, sat sadly down, and leaned her head on her hand. "I am cruel. I am ungrateful. He has gone away broken-hearted. And what shall I do without him? — little fool! I love him better than he loves me. He will never forgive me. I have wounded his vanity; and they are vainer than we are. If we meet at dinner I will be so kind to him, he will forget it all. No! Edouard will not come to dinner. He is not a spaniel that you can beat, and then whistle back again. Something tells me I have lost him, and if I have, what shall I do? I will write him a note. I will ask him to forgive me."

She sat down at the table, and took a sheet of note-paper and began to write a few conciliatory words. She was so occupied in making these kind enough, and not too kind, that a light step approached her unobserved. She looked up and there was Edouard. She whipped the paper off the table.

A look of suspicion and misery crossed Edouard's face.

Rose caught it, and said, "Well, am I to be affronted any more?"

"No, Rose. I came back to beg you to forget what passed just now," said he.

Rose's eye flashed; his return showed her her power. She abused it directly.

"How can I forget it if you come reminding me?"

"Dear Rose, now don't be so unkind, so cruel — I have not come back to tease you, sweet one. I come to know what I can do to please you; to make you love me

again?" and he was about to kneel graciously on one knee.

"I'll tell you. Don't come near me for a month."

Edouard started up, white as ashes with mortification and wounded love.

"This is how you treat me for humbling myself, when it is you that ought to ask forgiveness."

"Why should I ask what I don't care about?"

"What *do* you care about? — except that sister of yours? You have no heart. And on this cold-blooded creature I have wasted a love an empress might have been proud of inspiring. I pray Heaven some man may sport with your affections, you heartless creature, as you have played with mine, and make you suffer what I suffer now!"

And with a burst of inarticulate grief and rage he flung out of the room.

Rose sank trembling on the sofa a little while: then with a mighty effort rose and went to comfort her sister.

Edouard came no more to Beaurepaire.

There is an old French proverb, and a wise one, "*Rien n'est certain que l'imprévu;*" it means you can make sure of nothing but this, that matters will not turn as you feel sure they will. And, even for this reason, you, who are thinking of suicide because trade is declining, speculation failing, bankruptcy impending, or your life going to be blighted forever by unrequited love — *don't do it.* Whether you are English, American, French, or German, listen to a man that knows what is what, and *don't do it.* I tell you none of those horrors, when they really come, will affect you as you fancy they will. The joys we expect are not a quarter so bright, nor the troubles half so dark as we think they will be. Bankruptcy coming is one thing, come is quite another: and no heart

or life was ever really blighted at twenty years of age. The love-sick girls that are picked out of the canal alive, all, without exception, marry another man, have brats, and get to screech with laughter when they think of sweetheart No. 1, generally a blockhead, or else a blackguard, whom they were fools enough to wet their clothes for, let alone kill their souls. This happens *invariably.* The love-sick girls that are picked out of the canal dead have fled from a year's misery to eternal pain, from grief that time never failed to cure, to anguish incurable. In this world "*Rien n'est certain que l'imprévu.*"

Edouard and Rose were tender lovers, at a distance. How much happier and more loving they thought they should be beneath the same roof. They came together: their prominent faults of character rubbed: the secret that was in the house did its work: and altogether, they quarrelled. *L'imprévu.*

Dard had been saying to Jacintha for ever so long, "When granny dies, I will marry you."

Granny died. Dard took possession of her little property. Up came a glittering official, and turned him out; he was not her heir. Perrin, the notary, was. He had bought the inheritance of her two sons, long since dead.

Dard had not only looked on the cottage and cow, as his, but had spoken of them as such for years. The disappointment and the irony of comrades ate into him.

"I will leave this cursed place," said he.

Josephine instantly sent for him to Beaurepaire. He came, and was factotum with the novelty of a fixed salary. Jacintha accommodated him with a new little odd job or two. She set him to dance on the oak floors with a brush fastened to his right foot; and, after a rehearsal or two, she made him wait at table. Didn't he bang the things about: and when he brought a lady a dish, and she did not instantly attend, he gave her elbow a poke to attract

attention: then she squeaked; and he grinned at her double absurdity in minding a touch, and not minding the real business of the table.

But his wrongs rankled in him. He vented antique phrases such as, "I want a change;" "This village is the last place the Almighty made," etc.

Then he was attacked with a moral disease: affected the company of soldiers. He spent his weekly salary carousing with the military, a class of men so brilliant that they are not expected to pay for their share of the drink; they contribute the anecdotes and the familiar appeals to Heaven: and is not that enough?

Present at many recitals, the heroes of which lost nothing by being their own historians, Dard imbibed a taste for military adventure. His very talk, which used to be so homely, began now to be tinselled with big swelling words of vanity imported from the army. I need hardly say these bombastical phrases did not elevate his general dialect: they lay fearfully distinct upon the surface, "like lumps of marl upon a barren soil, encumbering the ground they could not fertilize."

Jacintha took leave to remind him of an incident connected with warfare — wounds.

"Do you remember how you were down upon your luck when you did but cut your foot? Why, that is nothing in the army. They never go out to fight but some come back with arms off, and some with legs off, and some with heads; and the rest don't come back at all: and how would you like that?"

This intrusion of statistics into warfare at first cooled Dard's impatience for the field. But presently the fighting half of his heart received an ally in one Sergeant La Croix (not a bad name for a military aspirant). This sergeant was at the village waiting to march with the new recruits to the Rhine. Sergeant La Croix was a

man who, by force of eloquence, could make soldiering appear the most delightful as well as glorious of human pursuits. His tongue fired the inexperienced soul with a love of arms, as do the drums and trumpets and tramp of soldiers, and their bayonets glittering in the sun. He would have been worth his weight in fustian here, where we recruit by that and jargon; he was superfluous in France, where they recruited by force: but he was ornamental: and he set Dard and one or two more on fire. Indeed, so absorbing was his sense of military glory, that there was no room left in him for that mere verbal honor civilians call veracity.

To speak plainly, the sergeant was a fluent, fertile, interesting, sonorous, prompt, audacious liar: and such was his success, that Dard and one or two more became mere human fiction pipes — of comparatively small diameter — irrigating a rural district with false views of military life, derived from that inexhaustible reservoir, La Croix.

At last the long-threatened conscription was levied: every person fit to bear arms, and not coming under the allowed exceptions, drew a number: and at a certain hour the numbers corresponding to these were deposited in an urn, and one-third of them were drawn in presence of the authorities. Those men whose numbers were drawn had to go for soldiers. Jacintha awaited the result in great anxiety. She could not sit at home for it; so she went down the road to meet Dard, who had promised to come and tell her the result as soon as known. At last she saw him approaching in a disconsolate way. "O Dard! speak! are we undone? are you a dead man?" cried she. "Have they made a soldier of you?"

"No such luck: I shall die a man of all work," grunted Dard.

"And you are sorry? you unnatural little monster! you have no feeling for me, then."

"Oh, yes, I have; but glory is No. 1 with me now."

"How loud the bantams crow! You leave glory to fools that be six feet high."

"General Bonaparte isn't much higher than I am, and glory sits upon his brow. Why shouldn't glory sit upon my brow?"

"Because it would weigh you down, and smother you, you little fool." She added, "And think of me, that couldn't bear you to be killed at any price, glory or no glory."

Then, to appease her fears, Dard showed her his number, 99; and assured her he had seen the last number in the functionary's hand before he came away, and it was sixty something.

This ocular demonstration satisfied Jacintha; and she ordered Dard to help her draw the water.

"All right," said he, "there is no immortal glory to be picked up to-day, so I'll go in for odd jobs."

While they were at this job a voice was heard hallooing. Dard looked up, and there was a rigid military figure, with a tremendous mustache, peering about. Dard was overjoyed. It was his friend, his boon-companion. "Come here, old fellow," cried he, "ain't I glad to see you, that is all?" La Croix marched towards the pair. "What are you skulking here for, recruit ninety-nine?" said he, sternly, dropping the boon-companion in the sergeant; "the rest are on the road."

"The rest, old fellow! what do you mean? why, I was not drawn."

"Yes, you were."

"No, I wasn't."

"Thunder of war, but I say you were. Yours was the last number."

"That is an unlucky guess of yours, for I saw the last number. Look here," and he fumbled in his pocket, and produced his number.

La Croix instantly fished out a corresponding number.

"Well, and here you are; this was the last number drawn."

Dard burst out laughing.

"You goose!" said he, "that is sixty-six — look at it."

"Sixty-six!" roared the sergeant; "no more than yours is — they are both sixty-sixes when you play tricks with them, and turn them up like that; but they are both ninety-nines when you look at them fair."

Dard scratched his head.

"Come," said the corporal, briskly, "make up his bundle, girl, and let us be off; we have got our marching orders; going to the Rhine."

"And do you think that I will let him go?" screamed Jacintha. "No! I will say one word to Madame Raynal, and she will buy him a substitute directly."

Dard stopped her sullenly. "No! I have told all in the village that I would go the first chance: it is come, and I'll go. I won't stay to be laughed at about this too. If I was sure to be cut in pieces, I'd go. Give over blubbering, girl, and get us a bottle of the best wine, and while we are drinking it, the sergeant and I, you make up my bundle. I shall never do any good here."

Jacintha knew the obstinate toad. She did as she was bid, and soon the little bundle was ready, and the two men faced the wine; La Croix, radiant and bellicose; Dard, crestfallen but dogged (for there was a little bit of good stuff at the bottom of the creature); and Jacintha rocking herself, with her apron over her head.

"I'll give you a toast," said La Croix. "Here's gunpowder."

Jacintha promptly honored the toast with a flood of tears.

"Drop that, Jacintha," said Dard, angrily; "do you think that is encouraging? Sergeant, I told this poor girl all about glory before you came, but she was not ripe for it: say something to cheer her up, for I can't."

"I can," cried this trumpet of battle, emptying its glass. "Attention, young woman."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! yes, sir."

"A French soldier is a man who carries France in his heart" —

"But if the cruel foreign soldiers kill him? Oh!"

"Why, in that case, he does not care a straw. Every man must die; horses likewise, and dogs, and donkeys, when they come to the end of their troubles; but dogs and donkeys and chaps in blouses can't die gloriously; as Dard may, if he has any luck at all: so, from this hour, if there was twice as little of him, be proud of him, for from this time he is a part of France and her renown. Come, recruit ninety-nine, shoulder your traps at duty's call, and let us go forth in form. Attention! Quick — march! Halt! is that the way I showed you to march? Didn't I tell you to start from the left? Now try again. *Quick* — march! left — right — left — right — left — right — *now* you've — *got* it — *drat* ye, — *keep* it — left — right — left — right — left — right." And with no more ado the sergeant marched the little odd-job man to the wars.

Vive la France!

CHAPTER XVIII.

Edouard, the moment his temper cooled, became very sad. He longed to be friends again with Rose, but did not know how. His own pride held him back, and so did his fear that he had gone too far, and that his offended mistress would not listen to an offer of reconciliation from him. He sat down alone now to all his little meals. No sweet, mellow voices in his ear after the fatigues of the day. It was a dismal change in his life.

At last, one day, he received three lines from Josephine, requesting him to come and speak to her. He went over directly, full of vague hopes. He found her seated pale and languid in a small room on the ground floor.

"What has she been doing to you, dear?" began she kindly.

"Has she not told you, Madame Raynal?"

"No; she is refractory. She will tell me nothing, and that makes me fear she is the one in fault."

"Oh! if she does not accuse me, I am sure I will not accuse her. I dare say I am to blame; it is not her fault that I cannot make her love me."

"But you can. She does."

"Yes; but she loves others better, and she holds me out no hope it will ever be otherwise. On this one point how can I hope for your sympathy; unfortunately for me you are one of my rivals. She told me plainly she never could love me as she loves you."

"And you believed her?"

"I had good reason to believe her."

Josephine smiled sadly. "Dear Edouard," said she, "you must not attach so much importance to every word we say. Does Rose at her age know everything? Is she a prophet? Perhaps she really fancies she will always love her sister as she does now; but you are a man of sense; you ought to smile and let her talk. When you marry her you will take her to your own house; she will only see me now and then; she will have you and your affection always present. Each day some new tie between you and her. You two will share every joy, every sorrow. Your children playing at your feet, and reflecting the features of both parents, will make you one. Your hearts will melt together in that blessed union which raises earth so near to heaven; and then you will wonder you could ever be jealous of poor Josephine, who must never hope — ah, me!"

Edouard, wrapped up in himself, mistook Josephine's emotion at the picture she had drawn of conjugal love. He soothed her, and vowed upon his honor he never would separate Rose from her.

"Madame Raynal," said he, "you are an angel, and I am a fiend. Jealousy must be the meanest of all sentiments. I never will be jealous again, above all, of you, sweet angel. Why, you are my sister as well as hers, and she has a right to love you, for I love you myself."

"You make me very happy when you talk so," sighed Josephine. "Peace is made?"

"Never again to be broken. I will go and ask her pardon. What is the matter now?"

For Jacintha was cackling very loud, and dismissing with ignominy two beggars, male and female.

She was industry personified, and had no sympathy with mendicity. In vain the couple protested, Heaven knows with what truth, that they were not beggars, but mechanics out of work. "March! tramp!" was Jacintha's

least word. She added, giving the rein to her imagination, "I'll loose the dog." The man moved away, the woman turned appealingly to Edouard. He and Josephine came towards the group. She had got a sort of large hood, and in that hood she carried an infant on her shoulders. Josephine inspected it. "It looks sickly, poor little thing," said she.

"What can you expect, young lady?" said the woman. "Its mother had to rise and go about when she ought to have been in her bed, and now she has not enough to give it."

"Oh, dear!" cried Josephine. "Jacintha, give them some food and a nice bottle of wine."

"That I will," cried Jacintha, changing her tone with courtier-like alacrity. "I did not see she was nursing."

Josephine put a franc into the infant's hand; the little fingers closed on it with that instinct of appropriation, which is our first and often our last sentiment. Josephine smiled lovingly on the child, and the child seeing that gave a small crow.

"Bless it," said Josephine, and thereupon her lovely head reared itself like a snake's, and then darted down on the child; and the young noble kissed the beggar's brat as if she would eat it.

This won the mother's heart more than even the gifts.

"Blessings on you, my lady!" she cried. "I pray the Lord not to forget this when a woman's trouble comes on you in your turn! It is a small child, mademoiselle, but it is not an unhealthy one. See." Inspection was offered, and eagerly accepted.

Edouard stood looking on at some distance in amazement, mingled with disgust.

"Ugh!" said he, when she rejoined him, "how could you kiss that nasty little brat?"

"Dear Edouard, don't speak so of a poor little innocent.

Who would pity them if we women did not? It had lovely eyes."

"Like saucers."

"Yes."

"It is no compliment when you are affectionate to anybody; you overflow with benevolence on all creation, like the rose which sheds its perfume on the first-comer."

"If he is not going to be jealous of me next," whined Josephine.

She took him to Rose, and she said, "There, whenever good friends quarrel, it is understood they were both in the wrong. Bygones are to be bygones; and when your time comes round to quarrel again, please consult me first, since it is me you will afflict." She left them together, and went and tapped timidly at the doctor's study.

Aubertin received her with none of that reserve she had seen in him. He appeared both surprised and pleased at her visit to his little sanctum. He even showed an emotion Josephine was at a loss to account for. But that wore off during the conversation, and, indeed, gave place to a sort of coldness.

"Dear friend," said she, "I come to consult you about Rose and Edouard." She then told him what had happened, and hinted at Edouard's one fault. The doctor smiled. "It is curious. You have come to draw my attention to a point on which it has been fixed for some days past. I am preparing a cure for the two young fools; a severe remedy, but in their case a sure one."

He then showed her a deed, wherein he had settled sixty thousand francs on Rose and her children. "Edouard," said he, "has a good place. He is active and rising, and with my sixty thousand francs, and a little purse of ten thousand more for furniture and nonsense, they can marry next week, if they like. Yes, marriage is a sovereign

medicine for both of these patients. She does not love him quite enough. Cure: marriage. He loves her a little too much. Cure: marriage."

"O doctor!"

"Can't help it. I did not make men and women. We must take human nature as we find it, and thank God for it on the whole. Have you nothing else to confide to me?"

"No, doctor."

"Are you sure?"

"No, dear friend. But this is very near my heart," faltered Josephine.

The doctor sighed; then said gently, "They shall be happy: as happy as you wish them."

Meantime, in another room, a reconciliation scene was taking place, and the mutual concessions of two impetuous but generous spirits.

The baroness noticed the change in Josephine's appearance.

She asked Rose what could be the matter.

"Some passing ailment," was the reply.

"Passing? She has been so, on and off, a long time. She makes me very anxious."

Rose made light of it to her mother, but in her own heart she grew more and more anxious day by day. She held secret conferences with Jacintha; that sagacious personage had a plan to wake Josephine from her deathly languor, and even soothe her nerves, and check those pitiable fits of nervous irritation to which she had become subject. Unfortunately, Jacintha's plan was so difficult and so dangerous, that at first even the courageous Rose recoiled from it; but there are dangers that seem to diminish when you look them long in the face.

The whole party was seated in the tapestried room: Jacintha was there, sewing a pair of sheets, at a respectful distance from the gentlefolks, absorbed in her work; but with both ears on full cock.

The doctor, holding his glasses to his eye, had just begun to read out the *Moniteur*.

The baroness sat close to him, Edouard opposite; and the young ladies each in her corner of a large luxurious sofa, at some little distance.

"'The Austrians left seventy cannon, eight thousand men, and three colors upon the field. Army of the North: General Menard defeated the enemy after a severe engagement, taking thirteen field-pieces and a quantity of ammunition.'"

The baroness made a narrow-minded remark. "That is always the way with these journals," said she. "Austrians! Prussians! when it's Egypt one wants to hear about." — "No, not a word about Egypt," said the doctor; "but there is a whole column about the Rhine, where Colonel Dujardin is — and Dard. If I was dictator, the first nuisance I would put down is small type." He then spelled out a sanguinary engagement: "eight thousand of the enemy killed. We have some losses to lament. Colonel Dujardin" —

"Only wounded, I hope," said the baroness.

The doctor went coolly on. "At the head of the 24th brigade made a brilliant charge on the enemy's flank, that is described in the general order as having decided the fate of the battle."

"How badly you do read," said the old lady, sharply. "I thought he was gone; instead of that he has covered himself with glory; but it is all our doing, is it not, young ladies? We saved his life."

"We saved it amongst us, madame."

"What is the matter, Rose?" said Edouard.

"Nothing: give me the salts, quick."

She only passed them, as it were, under her own nostrils; then held them to Josephine, who was now observed to be trembling all over. Rose contrived to make it appear that this was mere sympathy on Josephine's part.

"Don't be silly, girls," cried the baroness, cheerfully; "there is nobody killed that we care about."

Dr. Aubertin read the rest to himself.

Edouard fell into a gloomy silence and tortured himself about Camille, and Rose's anxiety and agitation.

By and by the new servant brought in a letter. It was the long-expected one from Egypt.

"Here is something better than salts for you. A long letter, Josephine, and all in his own hand; so he is safe, thank Heaven! I was beginning to be uneasy again. You frightened me for that poor Camille: but this is worth a dozen Camilles; this is my son; I would give my old life for him." — "My dear Mother — ('Bless him!'), my dear wife, and my dear sister — ('Well! you sit there like two rocks!') — We have just gained a battle — fifty colors. ('What do you think of that?') All the enemy's baggage and ammunition are in our hands. ('This is something like a battle, this one.') Also the Pasha of Natolie. ('Ah! the Pasha of Natolie; an important personage, no doubt, though I never had the honor of hearing of him. Do you hear? — you on the sofa. My son has captured the Pasha of Natolie. He is as brave as Cæsar.') But this success is not one of those that lead to important results ('Never mind, a victory is a victory'), and I should not wonder if Bonaparte was to dash home any day. If so, I shall go with him, and perhaps spend a whole day with you, on my way to the Rhine."

At this prospect a ghastly look passed quick as lightning between Rose and Josephine.

The baroness beckoned Josephine to come close to her, and read her what followed in a lower tone of voice.

"Tell my wife I love her more and more every day. I don't expect as much from her, but she will make me very happy if she can make shift to like me as well as her family do." — "No danger! What husband deserves to be loved as he does? I long for his return, that his wife, his mother, and his sister may all combine to teach this poor soldier what happiness means. We owe him everything, Josephine, and if we did not love him, and make him happy, we should be monsters; now should we not?"

Josephine stammered an assent.

"*Now* you may read his letter: Jacintha and all," said the baroness graciously.

The letter circulated. Meantime, the baroness conversed with Aubertin in quite an undertone.

"My friend, look at Josephine. That girl is ill, or else she is going to be ill."

"Neither the one nor the other, madame," said Aubertin, looking her coolly in the face.

"But I say she is. Is a doctor's eye keener than a mother's?"

"Considerably," replied the doctor with cool and enviable effrontery.

The baroness rose. "Now, children, for our evening walk. We shall enjoy it now."

"I trust you may: but for all that I must forbid the evening air to one of the party — to Madame Raynal."

The baroness came to him and whispered, "That is right. Thank you. See what is the matter with her, and tell me." And she carried off the rest of the party.

At the same time Jacintha asked permission to pass the rest of the evening with her relations in the village. But why that swift, quivering glance of intelligence

between Jacintha and Rose de Beaurepaire when the baroness said, "Yes, certainly"?

Time will show.

Josephine and the doctor were left alone. Now Josephine had noticed the old people whisper and her mother glance her way, and the whole woman was on her guard. She assumed a languid complacency, and by way of shield, if necessary, took some work, and bent her eyes and apparently her attention on it.

The doctor was silent and ill at ease.

She saw he had something weighty on his mind. "The air would have done me no harm," said she.

"Neither will a few words with me."

"Oh, no, dear friend. Only I think I should have liked a little walk this evening."

"Josephine," said the doctor quietly, "when you were a child I saved your life."

"I have often heard my mother speak of it. I was choked by the croup, and you had the courage to lance my windpipe."

"Had I?" said the doctor, with a smile. He added gravely, "It seems then that to be cruel is sometimes kindness. It is the nature of men to love those whose life they save."

"And they love you."

"Well, our affection is not perfect. I don't know which is most to blame, but after all these years I have failed to inspire you with confidence." The doctor's voice was sad, and Josephine's bosom panted.

"Pray do not say so," she cried. "I would trust you with my life."

"But not with your secret."

"My secret! What secret? I have no secrets."

"Josephine, you have now for full twelve months suffered in body and mind, yet you have never come to me

for counsel, for comfort, for an old man's experience and advice, nor even for medical aid."

"But, dear friend, I assure you" —

"We *do not* deceive our friend. We *cannot* deceive our doctor."

Josephine trembled, but defended herself after the manner of her sex. "Dear doctor," said she, "I love you all the better for this. Your regard for me has for once blinded your science. I am not so robust as you have known me, but there is nothing serious the matter with me. Let us talk of something else. Besides, it is not interesting to talk about one's self."

"Very well; since there is nothing serious or interesting in your case, we will talk about something that is both serious and interesting."

"With all my heart;" and she smiled with a sense of relief.

But the doctor leaned over the table to her, and said in a cautious and most emphatic whisper, "We will talk about YOUR CHILD."

The work dropped from Josephine's hands: she turned her face wildly on Aubertin, and faltered out, "M—my child?"

"My words are plain," replied he gravely. "YOUR CHILD."

When the doctor repeated these words, when Josephine looking in his face saw he spoke from knowledge, however acquired, and not from guess, she glided down slowly off the sofa and clasped his knees as he stood before her, and hid her face in an agony of shame and terror on his knees.

"Forgive me," she sobbed. "Pray do not expose me! Do not destroy me."

"Unhappy young lady," said he, "did you think you had deceived me, or that you are fit to deceive any but

the blind? Your face, your anguish after Colonel Dujardin's departure, your languor, and then your sudden robustness, your appetite, your caprices, your strange sojourn at Frejus, your changed looks and loss of health on your return! Josephine, your old friend has passed many an hour thinking of you, divining your folly, following your trouble step by step. Yet you never invited him to aid you."

Josephine faltered out a lame excuse. If she had revered him less she could have borne to confess to him. She added it would be a relief to her to confide in him.

"Then tell me all," said he.

She consented almost eagerly, and told him — nearly all. The old man was deeply affected. He murmured in a broken voice, "Your story is the story of your sex, self-sacrifice, first to your mother, then to Camille, now to your husband."

"And he is well worthy of any sacrifice I can make," said Josephine. "But oh, how hard it is to live!"

"I hope to make it less hard to you ere long," said the doctor quietly. He then congratulated himself on having forced Josephine to confide in him. "For," said he, "you never needed an experienced friend more than at this moment. Your mother will not always be so blind as of late. Edouard is suspicious. Jacintha is a shrewd young woman, and very inquisitive."

Josephine was not at the end of her concealments: she was ashamed to let him know she had made a confidant of Jacintha and not of him. She held her peace.

"Then," continued Aubertin, "there is the terrible chance of Raynal's return. But ere I take on me to advise you, what are your own plans?"

"*I* don't know," said Josephine helplessly.

"You — don't — know!" cried the doctor, looking at her in utter amazement.

"It is the answer of a mad woman, is it not? Doctor, I am little better. My foot has slipped on the edge of a precipice. I close my eyes, and let myself glide down it. What will become of me?"

"All shall be well," said Aubertin, "provided you do not still love that man."

Josephine did not immediately reply: her thoughts turned inwards. The good doctor was proceeding to congratulate her on being cured of a fatal passion, when she stopped him with wonder in her face. "Not love him! How can I help loving him? I was his betrothed. I wronged him in my thoughts. War, prison, anguish, could not kill him; he loved me so. He struggled bleeding to my feet; and could I let him die, after all? Could I be crueller than prison, and torture, and despair?"

The doctor sighed deeply; but, arming himself with the necessary resolution, he sternly replied, "A woman of your name cannot vacillate between love and honor; such vacillations have but one end. I will not let you drift a moral wreck between passion and virtue; and that is what it will come to if you hesitate now."

"Hesitate! Who can say I have hesitated where my honor was concerned? You can read our bodies then, but not our hearts. What! you see me so pale, forlorn, and dead, and that does not tell you I have bid Camille farewell forever? That we might be safer still I have not even told him he is a father: was ever woman so cruel as I am? I have written him but one letter, and in that I must deceive him. I told him I thought I might one day be happy, if I could hear that he did not give way to despair. I told him we must never meet again in this world. So now come what will: show me my duty and I will do it. This endless deceit burns my heart. Shall I tell my husband? It will be but one

pang more, one blush more for me. But my mother!" and, thus appealed to, Dr. Aubertin felt, for the first time, all the difficulty of the situation he had undertaken to cure. He hesitated, he was embarrassed.

"Ah," said Josephine, "you see." Then, after a short silence, she said despairingly, "This is my only hope: that poor Raynal will be long absent, and that ere he returns mamma will lie safe from sorrow and shame in the little chapel. Doctor, when a woman of my age forms such wishes as these, I think you might pity her, and forgive her ill-treatment of you, for she cannot be very happy. Ah me! ah me! ah me!"

"Courage, poor soul! All is now in my hands, and I will save you," said the doctor, his voice trembling in spite of him. "Guilt lies in the intention. A more innocent woman than you does not breathe. Two courses lay open to you: to leave this house with Camille Dujardin, or to dismiss him, and live for your hard duty till it shall please Heaven to make that duty easy (no middle course was tenable for a day); of these two paths you chose the right one, and, having chosen, I really think you are not called on to reveal your misfortune, and make those unhappy to whose happiness you have sacrificed your own for years to come."

"Forever," said Josephine quietly.

"The young use that word lightly. The old have almost ceased to use it. They have seen how few earthly things can conquer time."

He resumed, "You think only of others, Josephine, but I shall think of you as well. I shall not allow your life to be wasted in a needless struggle against nature." Then turning to Rose, who had glided into the room, and stood amazed, "Her griefs were as many before her child was born, yet her health stood firm. Why? because nature was on her side. Now she is

sinking into the grave. Why? because she is defying nature. Nature intended her to be pressing her child to her bosom day and night; instead of that, a peasant woman at Frejus nurses the child, and the mother pines at Beaurepaire."

At this, Josephine leaned her face on her hands on the doctor's shoulder. In this attitude she murmured to him, "I have never seen him since I left Frejus." Dr. Aubertin sighed for her. Emboldened by this, she announced her intention of going to Frejus the very next day to see her little Henri. But to this Dr. Aubertin demurred. "What, another journey to Frejus?" said he, "when the first has already roused Edouard's suspicions; I can never consent to that."

Then Josephine surprised them both. She dropped her coaxing voice and pecked the doctor like an irritated pigeon. "Take care," said she, "don't be too cruel to me. You see I am obedient, resigned. I have given up all I lived for: but if I am never to have my little boy's arms round me to console me, then — why torment me any longer? Why not say to me, 'Josephine, you have offended Heaven; pray for pardon, and die'?"

Then the doctor was angry in his turn. "Oh, go then," said he, "go to Frejus; you will have Edouard Riviere for a companion this time. Your first visit roused his suspicions. So before you go tell your mother all; for since she is sure to find it out, she had better hear it from you than from another."

"Doctor, have pity on me," said Josephine.

"You have no heart," said Rose. "She shall see him though, in spite of you."

"Oh, yes! he has a heart," said Josephine: "he is my best friend. He will let me see my boy."

All this, and the tearful eyes and coaxing yet trembling voice, was hard to resist. But Aubertin saw clearly,

and stood firm. He put his handkerchief to his eyes a moment: then took the pining young mother's hand. "And, do you think," said he, "I do not pity you and love your boy? Ah! he will never want a father whilst I live; and from this moment he is under my care. I will go to see him; I will bring you news, and all in good time; I will place him where you shall visit him without imprudence; but, for the present, trust a wiser head than yours or Rose's; and give me your sacred promise not to go to Frejus."

Weighed down by his good-sense and kindness, Josephine resisted no longer in words. She just lifted her hands in despair and began to cry. It was so piteous, Aubertin was ready to yield in turn, and consent to any imprudence, when he met with an unexpected ally.

"Promise," said Rose, doggedly.

Josephine looked at her calmly through her tears.

"Promise, dear," repeated Rose, and this time with an intonation so fine that it attracted Josephine's notice, but not the doctor's. It was followed by a glance equally subtle.

"I promise," said Josephine, with her eye fixed inquiringly on her sister.

For once she could not make the telegraph out: but she could see it was playing, and that was enough. She did what Rose bid her; she promised not to go to Frejus without leave.

Finding her so submissive all of a sudden, he went on to suggest that she must not go kissing every child she saw. "Edouard tells me he saw you kissing a beggar's brat. The young rogue was going to quiz you about it at the dinner-table; luckily, he told me his intention, and I would not let him. I said the baroness would be annoyed with you for descending from your dignity — and exposing a noble family to fleas — hush! here he is."

"Tiresome!" muttered Rose, "just when" —

Edouard came forward with a half-vexed face.

However, he turned it off into play. "What have you been saying to her, monsieur, to interest her so? Give me a leaf out of your book. I need it."

The doctor was taken aback for a moment, but at last he said slyly, "I have been proposing to her to name the day. She says she must consult you before she decides that."

"Oh, you wicked doctor! — and consult *him* of all people!"

"So be off, both of you, and don't reappear before me till it is settled."

Edouard's eyes sparkled. Rose went out with a face as red as fire.

It was a balmy evening. Edouard was to leave them for a week the next day. They were alone: Rose was determined he should go away quite happy. Everything was in Edouard's favor: he pleaded his cause warmly: she listened tenderly: this happy evening her piquancy and archness seemed to dissolve into tenderness as she and Edouard walked hand in hand under the moon: a tenderness all the more heavenly to her devoted lover, that she was not one of those angels who cloy a man by invariable sweetness.

For a little while she forgot everything but her companion. In that soft hour he won her to name the day, after her fashion.

"Josephine goes to Paris with the doctor in about three weeks," murmured she.

"And you will stay behind, all alone?"

"Alone? that shall depend on you, monsieur."

On this Edouard caught her for the first time in his arms.

She made a faint resistance.

"Seal me that promise, sweet one!"

"No! no! — there!"

He pressed a delicious first kiss upon two velvet lips that in their innocence scarcely shunned the sweet attack.

For all that, the bond was no sooner sealed after this fashion, than the lady's cheek began to burn.

"Suppose we go in *now?*" said she, dryly.

"Ah, not yet."

"It is late, dear Edouard."

And with these words something returned to her mind with its full force: something that Edouard had actually made her forget. She wanted to get rid of him now.

"Edouard," said she, "can you get up early in the morning? If you can, meet me here to-morrow before any of them are up; then we can talk without interruption."

Edouard was delighted.

"Eight o'clock?"

"Sooner if you like. Mamma bade me come and read to her in her room to-night. She will be waiting for me. Is it not tiresome?"

"Yes, it is."

"Well, we must not mind that, dear; in three weeks' time we are to have too much of one another, you know, instead of too little."

"Too much! I shall never have enough of you. I shall hate the night which will rob me of the sight of you for so many hours in the twenty-four."

"If you can't see me, perhaps you may hear me; my tongue runs by night as well as by day."

"Well, that is a comfort," said Edouard, gravely. "Yes, little quizzer, I would rather hear you scold than an angel sing. Judge, then, what music it is when you say you love me!"

"I love you, Edouard."

Edouard kissed her hand warmly, and then looked irresolutely at her face.

"No, no!" said she, laughing and blushing. "How rude you are. Next time we meet."

"That is a bargain. But I won't go till you say you love me again."

"Edouard, don't be silly. I am ashamed of saying the same thing so often — I won't say it any more. What is the use? You know I love you. There, I *have* said it: how stupid!"

"Adieu, then, my wife that is to be."

"Adieu! dear Edouard."

"My hus — go on — my hus —"

"My huswife that shall be."

Then they walked very slowly towards the house, and once more Rose left quizzing, and was all tenderness.

"Will you not come in, and bid them 'good-night'?"

"No, my own; I am in heaven. Common faces — common voices would bring me down to earth. Let me be alone; — your sweet words ringing in my ear. I will dilute you with nothing meaner than the stars. See how bright they shine in heaven; but not so bright as you shine in my heart."

"Dear Edouard, you flatter me, you spoil me. Alas! why am I not more worthy of your love?"

"More worthy! How can that be?"

Rose sighed.

"But I will atone for all. I will make you a better — (here she substituted a full stop for a substantive) — than you expect. You will see else."

She lingered at the door: a proof that if Edouard, at that particular moment, had seized another kiss, there would have been no very violent opposition or offence.

But he was not so impudent as some. He had been told to wait till the next meeting for that. He prayed

Heaven to bless her, and so the affianced lovers parted for the night.

It was about nine o'clock. Edouard, instead of returning to his lodgings, started down towards the town, to conclude a bargain with the innkeeper for an English mare he was in treaty for. He wanted her for to-morrow's work; so that decided him to make the purchase. In purchases, as in other matters, a feather turns the balanced scale. He sauntered leisurely down. It was a very clear night; the full moon and the stars shining silvery and vivid. Edouard's heart swelled with joy. He was loved after all, deeply loved; and in three short weeks he was actually to be Rose's husband: her lord and master. How like a heavenly dream it all seemed — the first hopeless courtship, and now the wedding fixed! But it was no dream; he felt her soft words still murmur music at his heart, and the shadow of her velvet lips slept upon his own.

He had strolled about a league when he heard the ring of a horse's hoofs coming towards him, accompanied by a clanking noise; it came nearer and nearer, till it reached a hill that lay a little ahead of Edouard; then the sounds ceased; the cavalier was walking his horse up the hill.

Presently, as if they had started from the earth, up popped between Edouard and the sky, first a cocked hat that seemed in that light to be cut with a razor out of flint; then the wearer, phosphorescent here and there; so brightly the keen moonlight played on his epaulets and steel scabbard. A step or two nearer, and Edouard gave a great shout; it was Colonel Raynal.

After the first warm greeting, and questions and answers, Raynal told him he was on his way to the Rhine with despatches.

"To the Rhine?"

"I am allowed six days to get there. I made a calculation, and found I could give Beaurepaire half a day. I shall have to make up for it by hard riding. You know me; always in a hurry. It is Bonaparte's fault this time. He is always in a hurry too."

"Why, colonel," said Edouard, "let us make haste then. Mind they go early to rest at the château."

"But you are not coming my way, youngster?"

"Not coming your way? Yes, but I am. Yours is a face I don't see every day, colonel; besides I would not miss *their* faces, especially the baroness's and Madame Raynal's, at sight of you; and, besides," — and the young gentleman chuckled to himself, and thought of Rose's words, "the next time we meet;" well, this will be the next time. "May I jump up behind?"

Colonel Raynal nodded assent. Edouard took a run, and lighted like a monkey on the horse's crupper. He pranced and kicked at this unexpected addition; but the spur being promptly applied to his flanks, he bounded off with a snort that betrayed more astonishment than satisfaction, and away they cantered to Beaurepaire, without drawing rein.

"There," said Edouard, "I was afraid they would be gone to bed; and they are. The very house seems asleep — fancy — at half-past ten."

"That is a pity," said Raynal, "for this château is the stronghold of etiquette. They will be two hours dressing before they will come out and shake hands. I must put my horse into the stable. Go you and give the alarm."

"I will, colonel. Stop, first let me see whether none of them are up, after all."

And Edouard walked round the château, and soon discovered a light at one window, the window of the tapestried room. Running round the other way he came

slap upon another light: this one was nearer the ground. A narrow but massive door, which he had always seen not only locked but screwed up, was wide open; and through the aperture the light of a candle streamed out and met the moonlight streaming in.

"Hallo!" cried Edouard.

He stopped, turned, and looked in.

"Hallo!" he cried again much louder.

A young woman was sleeping with her feet in the silvery moonlight, and her head in the orange-colored blaze of a flat candle, which rested on the next step above of a fine stone staircase, whose existence was now first revealed to the inquisitive Edouard.

Coming plump upon all this so unexpectedly, he quite started.

"Why, Jacintha!"

He touched her on the shoulder to wake her. No. Jacintha was sleeping as only tired domestics can sleep. He might have taken the candle and burnt her gown off her back. She had found a step that fitted into the small of her back, and another that supported her head, and there she was fast as a door.

At this moment Raynal's voice was heard calling him.

"There is a light in that bedroom."

"It is not a bedroom, colonel; it is our sitting-room now. We shall find them all there, or at least the young ladies; and perhaps the doctor. The baroness goes to bed early. Meantime I can show you one of our *dramatis personæ*, and an important one too. She rules the roost."

He took him mysteriously and showed him Jacintha.

Moonlight by itself seems white, and candlelight by itself seems yellow; but when the two come into close contrast at night, candle turns a reddish flame, and moonlight a bluish gleam.

IT WAS COLONEL RAYNAL

So Jacintha, with her shoes in this celestial sheen, and her face in that demoniacal glare, was enough to knock the gazer's eye out.

"Make a good sentinel — this one," said Raynal — "an outlying picket for instance, on rough ground, in front of the enemy's riflemen."

"Ha! ha! colonel! Let us see where this staircase leads. I have an idea it will prove a short cut."

"Where to?"

"To the saloon, or somewhere, or else to some of Jacintha's haunts. Serve her right for going to sleep at the mouth of her den."

"Forward then — no, halt! Suppose it leads to the bedrooms? Mind this is a thundering place for ceremony. We shall get drummed out of the barracks if we don't mind our etiquette."

At this they hesitated; and Edouard himself thought, on the whole, it would be better to go and hammer at the front door.

Now while they hesitated, a soft delicious harmony of female voices suddenly rose, and seemed to come and run round the walls. The men looked at one another in astonishment; for the effect was magical. The staircase being enclosed on all sides with stone walls and floored with stone, they were like flies inside a violoncello; the voices rang above, below, and on every side of the vibrating walls. In some epochs spirits as hardy as Raynal's, and wits as quick as Riviere's, would have fled then and there to the nearest public, and told over cups how they had heard the dames of Beaurepaire, long since dead, holding their revel, and the conscious old devil's nest of a château quivering to the ghostly strains.

But this was an incredulous age. They listened, and listened, and decided the sounds came from up-stairs.

"Let us mount, and surprise these singing witches," said Edouard.

"Surprise them! what for? It is not the enemy — for once. What is the good of surprising our friends?"

Storming parties and surprises were no novelty and therefore no treat to Raynal.

"It will be so delightful to see their faces at first sight of you. O colonel, for my sake! Don't spoil it by going tamely in at the front door, after coming at night from Egypt for half an hour."

Raynal grumbled something about its being a childish trick; but to please Edouard consented at last; only stipulated for a light: "or else," said he, "we shall surprise ourselves instead with a broken neck, going over ground we don't know to surprise the natives — our skirmishers got nicked that way now and then in Egypt."

"Yes, colonel, I will go first with Jacintha's candle." Edouard mounted the stairs on tiptoe. Raynal followed. The solid stone steps did not prate. The men had mounted a considerable way, when puff a blast of wind came through a hole, and out went Edouard's candle. He turned sharply round to Raynal. "*Peste!*" said he in a vicious whisper. But the other laid his hand on his shoulder and whispered, "Look to the front." He looked, and, his own candle being out, saw a glimmer on ahead. He crept towards it. It was a taper shooting a feeble light across a small aperture. They caught a glimpse of what seemed to be a small apartment. Yet Edouard recognized the carpet of the tapestried room — which was a very large room. Creeping a yard nearer, he discovered that it was the tapestried room, and that what had seemed the further wall was only the screen, behind which were lights, and two women singing a duet.

He whispered to Raynal, "It is the tapestried room."

"Is it a sitting-room?" whispered Raynal.

"Yes! yes! Mind and not knock your foot against the wood."

And Raynal went softly up and put his foot quietly through the aperture, which he now saw was made by a panel drawn back close to the ground; and stood in the tapestried chamber. The carpet was thick; the voices favored the stealthy advance; the floor of the old house was like a rock; and Edouard put his face through the aperture, glowing all over with anticipation of the little scream of joy that would welcome his friend dropping in so nice and suddenly from Egypt.

The feeling was rendered still more piquant by a sharp curiosity that had been growing on him for some minutes past. For why was this passage opened to-night? — he had never seen it opened before. And why was Jacintha lying sentinel at the foot of the stairs?

But this was not all. Now that they were in the room both men became conscious of another sound besides the ladies' voices — a very peculiar sound. It also came from behind the screen. They both heard it, and showed, by the puzzled looks they cast at one another, that neither could make out what on earth it was. It consisted of a succession of little rustles, followed by little thumps on the floor.

But what was curious, too, this rustle, thump — rustle, thump — fell exactly into the time of the music; so that, clearly, either the rustle thump was being played to the tune, or the tune sung to the rustle thump.

This last touch of mystery inflamed Edouard's impatience beyond bearing: he pointed eagerly and merrily to the corner of the screen. Raynal obeyed, and stepped very slowly and cautiously towards it.

Rustle, thump! rustle, thump! rustle, thump! with the rhythm of harmonious voices.

Edouard got his head and foot into the room without taking his eye off Raynal.

Rustle, thump! rustle, thump! rustle, thump!

Raynal was now at the screen, and quietly put his head round it, and his hand upon it.

Edouard was bursting with expectation.

No result. What is this? Don't they see him? Why does he not speak to them? He seems transfixed.

Rustle, thump! rustle, thump; accompanied now for a few notes by one voice only, Rose's.

Suddenly there burst a shriek from Josephine, so loud, so fearful, that it made even Raynal stagger back a step, the screen in his hand.

Then another scream of terror and anguish from Rose. Then a fainter cry, and the heavy helpless fall of a human body.

Raynal sprang forward whirling the screen to the earth in terrible agitation, and Edouard bounded over it as it fell at his feet. He did not take a second step. The scene that caught his eye stupefied and paralyzed him in full career, and froze him to the spot with amazement and strange misgivings.

CHAPTER XIX.

To return for a moment to Rose. She parted from Edouard, and went in at the front door: but the next moment she opened it softly and watched her lover unseen. "Dear Edouard!" she murmured: and then she thought, "how sad it is that I must deceive him, even to-night: must make up an excuse to get him from me, when we were so happy together. Ah! he little knows how *I* shall welcome our wedding-day. When once I can see my poor martyr on the road to peace and content under the good doctor's care. And oh! the happiness of having no more secrets from him I love! Dear Edouard! when once we are married, I never, never, will have a secret from you again — I swear it."

As a comment on these words she now stepped cautiously out, and peered in every direction.

"St — st!" she whispered. No answer came to this signal.

Rose returned into the house and bolted the door inside. She went up to the tapestried room, and found the doctor in the act of wishing Josephine good-night. The baroness, fatigued a little by her walk, had mounted no higher than her own bedroom, which was on the first floor just under the tapestried room. Rose followed the doctor out. "Dear friend, one word. Josephine talked of telling Raynal. You have not encouraged her to do that?"

"Certainly not, while he is in Egypt."

"Still less on his return. Doctor, you don't know that man. Josephine does not know him. But I do. He

would kill her if he knew. He would kill her that minute. He would not wait: he would not listen to excuses: he is a man of iron. Or if he spared her he would kill Camille: and that would destroy her by the cruellest of all deaths! My friend, I am a wicked, miserable girl. I am the cause of all this misery!"

She then told Aubertin all about the anonymous letter, and what Raynal had said to her in consequence.

"He never would have married her had he known she loved another. He asked me was it so. I told him a falsehood. At least I equivocated, and to equivocate with one so loyal and simple was to deceive him. I am the only sinner: that sweet angel is the only sufferer. Is this the justice of Heaven? Doctor, my remorse is great. No one knows what I feel when I look at my work. Edouard thinks I love her so much better than I do him. He is wrong: it is not love only, it is pity: it is remorse for the sorrow I have brought on her, and the wrong I have done poor Raynal."

The high-spirited girl was greatly agitated: and Aubertin, though he did not acquit her of all blame, soothed her, and made excuses for her.

"We must not always judge by results," said he. "Things turned unfortunately. You did for the best. I forgive you for one. That is, I will forgive you if you promise not to act again without my advice."

"Oh, never! never!"

"And, above all, no imprudence about that child. In three little weeks they will be together without risk of discovery. Well, you don't answer me."

Rose's blood turned cold. "Dear friend," she stammered, "I quite agree with you."

"Promise, then."

"Not to let Josephine go to Frejus?" said Rose hastily. "Oh, yes! I promise."

"You are a good girl," said Aubertin. "You have a will of your own. But you can submit to age and experience." The doctor then kissed her, and bade her farewell.

"I leave for Paris at six in the morning," he said. "I will not try your patience or hers unnecessarily. Perhaps it will not be three weeks ere she sees her child under her friend's roof."

The moment Rose was alone, she sat down and sighed bitterly. "There is no end to it," she sobbed despairingly. "It is like a spider's web: every struggle to be free but multiplies the fine yet irresistible thread that seems to bind me. And to-night I thought to be so happy; instead of that, he has left me scarce the heart to do what I have to do."

She went back to the room, opened a window, and put out a white handkerchief, then closed the window down on it.

Then she went to Josephine's bedroom-door: it opened on the tapestried room.

"Josephine," she cried, "don't go to bed just yet."

"No, love. What are you doing? I want to talk to you. Why did you say promise? and what did you mean by looking at me so? Shall I come out to you?"

"Not just yet," said Rose; she then glided into the corridor, and passed her mother's room and the doctor's, and listened to see if all was quiet. While she was gone Josephine opened her door; but not seeing Rose in the sitting-room, retired again.

Rose returned softly, and sat down with her head in her hand, in a calm attitude belied by her glancing eye, and the quick tapping of her other hand upon the table.

Presently she raised her head quickly; a sound had reached her ear, — a sound so slight that none but a

high-strung ear could have caught it. It was like a mouse giving a single scratch against a stone wall.

Rose coughed slightly.

On this a clearer sound was heard, as of a person scratching wood with the finger-nail. Rose darted to the side of the room, pressed against the wall, and at the same time put her other hand against the rim of one of the panels and pushed it laterally; it yielded, and at the opening stood Jacintha in her cloak and bonnet.

"Yes," said Jacintha, "under my cloak — look!"

"Ah! you found the things on the steps?"

"Yes! I nearly tumbled over them. Have you locked that door?"

"No, but I will." And Rose glided to the door and locked it. Then she put the screen up between Josephine's room and the open panel: then she and Jacintha were wonderfully busy on the other side the screen, but presently Rose said, "This is imprudent; you must go down to the foot of the stairs and wait till I call you."

Jacintha pleaded hard against this arrangement, and represented that there was no earthly chance of any one coming to that part of the château.

"No matter; I will be guarded on every side."

"Mustn't I stop and just see her happy for once?"

"No, my poor Jacintha, you must hear it from my lips."

Jacintha retired to keep watch as she was bid. Rose went to Josephine's room, and threw her arms round her neck and kissed her vehemently. Josephine returned her embrace, then held her out at arm's length and looked at her.

"Your eyes are red, yet your little face is full of joy. There, you smile."

"I can't help that; I am so happy."

"I am glad of it. Are you coming to bed?"

"Not yet. I invite you to take a little walk with me first. Come!" and she led the way slowly, looking back with infinite archness and tenderness.

"You almost frighten me," said Josephine; "it is not like you to be all joy when I am sad. Three whole weeks more!"

"That is it. Why are you sad? because the doctor would not let you go to Frejus. And why am I not sad? because I had already thought of a way to let you see Edouard without going so far."

"Rose! O Rose! O Rose!"

"This way — come!" and she smiled and beckoned with her finger, while Josephine followed like one under a spell, her bosom heaving, her eye glancing on every side, hoping some strange joy, yet scarce daring to hope.

Rose drew back the screen, and there was a sweet little *berceau* that had once been Josephine's own, and in it, sunk deep in snow-white lawn, was a sleeping child, that lay there looking as a rose might look could it fall upon new-fallen snow.

At sight of it Josephine uttered a little cry, not loud but deep — ay, a cry to bring tears into the eye of the hearer, and she stood trembling from head to foot, her hands clasped, and her eye fascinated and fixed on the cradle.

"My child under this roof! What have you done?" but her eye, fascinated and fixed, never left the cradle.

"I saw you languishing, dying, for want of him."

"Oh, if anybody should come?" But her eye never stirred an inch from the cradle.

"No, no, no! the door is locked. Jacintha watches below; there is no dan— Ah, oh, poor sister!"

For, as Rose was speaking, the young mother sprang

silently upon her child. You would have thought she was going to kill him; her head reared itself again and again like a crested snake's, and again and again and again and again plunged down upon the child, and she kissed his little body from head to foot with soft violence, and murmured, through her streaming tears, "My child! my darling! my angel! oh, my poor boy! my child! my child!"

I will ask my female readers of every degree to tell their brothers and husbands all the young noble did: how she sat on the floor, and had her child on her bosom; how she smiled over it through her tears; how she purred over it; how she, the stately one, lisped and prattled over it; and how life came pouring into her heart from it.

Before she had had it in her arms five minutes, her pale cheek was as red as a rose, and her eyes brighter than diamonds.

"Bless you, Rose! bless you! bless you! in one moment you have made me forget all I ever suffered in my life."

"There is a cold draught," cried she presently, with maternal anxiety; "close the panel, Rose."

"No, dear; or I could not call to Jacintha, or she to me; but I will shift the screen round between him and the draught. There, now, come to his aunt — a darling!"

Then Rose sat on the floor too, and Josephine put her boy on aunt's lap, and took a distant view of him. But she could not bear so vast a separation long. She must have him to her bosom again.

Presently my lord, finding himself hugged, opened his eyes, and, as a natural consequence, his mouth.

"Oh, that will never do," cried Rose, and they put him back in the cradle with all expedition, and began to rock it. Young master was not to be altogether ap-

peased even by that. So Rose began singing an old-fashioned Breton chant or lullaby.

Josephine sang with her, and, singing, watched with a smile her boy drop off by degrees to sleep under the gentle motion and the lulling song. They sang and rocked till the lids came creeping down, and hid the great blue eyes; but still they sang and rocked, lulling the boy, and gladdening their own hearts; for the quaint old Breton ditty was tunable as the lark that carols over the green wheat in April; and the words so simple and motherly, that a nation had taken them to heart. Such songs bind ages together and make the lofty and the low akin by the great ties of music and the heart. Many a Breton peasant's bosom in the olden time had gushed over her sleeping boy as the young dame's of Beaurepaire gushed now — in this quaint, tuneful lullaby.

Now, as they kneeled over the cradle, one on each side, and rocked it, and sang that ancient chant, Josephine, who was opposite the screen, happening to raise her eyes, saw a strange thing.

There was the face of a man set close against the side of the screen, and peeping and peering out of the gloom. The light of her candle fell full on this face; it glared at her, set pale, wonder-struck, and vivid in the surrounding gloom.

Horror! It was her husband's face.

At first she was quite stupefied, and looked at it with soul and senses benumbed. Then she trembled, and put her hand to her eyes; for she thought it a phantom or a delusion of the mind. No: there it glared still. Then she trembled violently, and held out her left hand, the fingers working convulsively, to Rose, who was still singing.

But, at the same moment, the mouth of this face suddenly opened in a long-drawn breath. At this, Josephine

uttered a violent shriek, and sprang to her feet, with her right hand quivering and pointing at that pale face set in the dark.

Rose started up, and, wheeling her head round, saw Raynal's gloomy face looking over her shoulder. She fell screaming upon her knees, and, almost out of her senses, began to pray wildly and piteously for mercy.

Josephine uttered one more cry, but this was the faint cry of nature, sinking under the shock of terror. She swooned dead away, and fell senseless on the floor ere Raynal could debarrass himself of the screen, and get to her.

This, then, was the scene that met Edouard's eyes.

His affianced bride on her knees, white as a ghost, trembling, and screaming, rather than crying, for mercy. And Raynal standing over his wife, showing by the working of his iron features that he doubted whether she was worthy he should raise her.

One would have thought nothing could add to the terror of this scene. Yet it was added to. The baroness rang her bell violently in the room below. She had heard Josephine's scream and fall.

At the ringing of this shrill bell Rose shuddered like a maniac, and grovelled on her knees to Raynal, and seized his very knees and implored him to show some pity.

"O sir! kill us! we are culpable" —

Dring! dring! dring! dring! dring! pealed the baroness's bell again.

"But do not tell our mother. Oh, if you are a man! do not! do not! Show us some pity. We are but women. Mercy! mercy! mercy!"

"Speak out then," groaned Raynal. "What does this mean? Why has my wife swooned at sight of me? — whose is this child?"

"Whose?" stammered Rose. Till he said that, she never thought there *could* be a doubt whose child.

Dring! dring! dring! dring! dring!

"Oh, my God!" cried the poor girl, and her scared eyes glanced every way like some wild creature looking for a hole, however small, to escape by.

Edouard, seeing her hesitation, came down on her other side. "Whose is the child, Rose?" said he sternly.

"You, too? Why were we born? mercy! oh! pray let me go to my sister."

Dring! dring! dring! dring! dring! went the terrible bell.

The men were excited to fury by Rose's hesitation; they each seized an arm, and tore her screaming with fear at their violence, from her knees up to her feet between them with a single gesture.

"Whose is the child?"

"You hurt me!" said she bitterly to Edouard, and she left crying and was terribly calm and sullen all in a moment.

"Whose is the child?" roared Edouard and Raynal, in one raging breath. "Whose is the child?"

"It is mine."

CHAPTER XX.

These were not words; they were electric shocks.

The two arms that gripped Rose's arms were paralyzed, and dropped off them; and there was silence.

Then first the thought of all she had done with those three words began to rise and grow and surge over her. She stood, her eyes turned downwards, yet inwards, and dilating with horror.

Silence.

Now a mist began to spread over her eyes, and in it she saw indistinctly the figure of Raynal darting to her sister's side, and raising her head.

She dared not look round on the other side. She heard feet stagger on the floor. She heard a groan, too; but not a word.

Horrible silence.

With nerves strung to frenzy, and quivering ears, that magnified every sound, she waited for a reproach, a curse; either would have been some little relief. But no! a silence far more terrible.

Then a step wavered across the room. Her soul was in her ear. She could hear and feel the step totter, and it shook her as it went. All sounds were trebled to her. Then it struck on the stone step of the staircase, not like a step, but a knell; another step, another and another; down to the very bottom. Each slow step made her head ring and her heart freeze.

At last she heard no more. Then a scream of anguish and recall rose to her lips. She fought it down, for Josephine and Raynal. Edouard was gone. She had

but her sister now, the sister she loved better than herself; the sister to save whose life and honor she had this moment sacrificed her own, and all a woman lives for.

She turned, with a wild cry of love and pity, to that sister's side to help her; and when she kneeled down beside her, an iron arm was promptly thrust out between the beloved one and her.

"This is my care, madame," said Raynal, coldly.

There was no mistaking his manner. The stained one was not to touch his wife.

She looked at him in piteous amazement at his ingratitude. "It is well," said she. "It is just. I deserve this from you."

She said no more, but drooped gently down beside the cradle, and hid her forehead in the clothes beside the child that had brought all this woe, and sobbed bitterly.

Then honest Raynal began to be sorry for her, in spite of himself. But there was no time for this. Josephine stirred; and, at the same moment, a violent knocking came at the door of the apartment, and the new servant's voice, crying, "Ladies, for Heaven's sake, what is the matter? The baroness heard a fall — she is getting up — she will be here. What shall I tell her is the matter?"

Raynal was going to answer, but Rose, who had started up at the knocking, put her hand in a moment right before his mouth, and ran to the door. "There is nothing the matter; tell mamma I am coming down to her directly." She flew back to Raynal in an excitement little short of frenzy. "Help me carry her into her own room," cried she imperiously. Raynal obeyed by instinct; for the fiery girl spoke like a general, giving the word of command, with the enemy in front. He carried the true culprit in his arms, and laid her gently on her bed.

"Now put *it* out of sight — take this, quick, man! quick!" cried Rose.

Raynal went to the cradle. "Ah! my poor girl," said he, as he lifted it in his arms, "this is a sorry business; to have to hide your own child from your own mother!"

"Colonel Raynal," said Rose, "do not insult a poor, despairing girl. *C'est lâche.*"

"I am silent, young woman," said Raynal, sternly. "What is to be done?"

"Take it down the steps, and give it to Jacintha. Stay, here is a candle; I go to tell mamma you are come; and, Colonel Raynal, I never injured *you:* if you tell my mother you will stab her to the heart, and me, and may the curse of cowards light on you! — may" —

"Enough!" said Raynal, sternly. "Do you take me for a babbling girl? I love your mother better than *you* do, or this brat of yours would not be here. *I* shall not bring her gray hairs down with sorrow to the grave. I shall speak of this villany to but one person; and to him I shall talk with this, and not with the idle tongue." And he tapped his sword-hilt with a sombre look of terrible significance.

He carried out the cradle. The child slept sweetly through it all.

Rose darted into Josephine's room, took the key from the inside to the outside, locked the door, put the key in her pocket, and ran down to her mother's room; her knees trembled under her as she went.

Meantime, Jacintha, sleeping tranquilly, suddenly felt her throat griped, and heard a loud voice ring in her ear; then she was lifted, and wrenched, and dropped. She found herself lying clear of the steps in the moonlight; her head was where her feet had been, and her candle out.

She uttered shriek upon shriek, and was too frightened to get up. She thought it was supernatural; some old De Beaurepaire had served her thus for sleeping on

her post. A struggle took place between her fidelity and her superstitious fears. Fidelity conquered. Quaking in every limb, she groped up the staircase for her candle.

It was gone.

Then a still more sickening fear came over her.

What if this was no spirit's work, but a human arm — a strong one — some man's arm ?

Her first impulse was to dart up the stairs, and make sure that no calamity had befallen through her mistimed drowsiness. But, when she came to try, her dread of the supernatural revived. She could not venture without a light up those stairs, thronged perhaps with angry spirits. She ran to the kitchen. She found the tinder-box, and with trembling hands struck a light. She came back shading it with her shaky hands; and, committing her soul to the care of Heaven, she crept quaking up the stairs. Then she heard voices above, and that restored her more; she mounted more steadily. Presently she stopped, for a heavy step was coming down. It did not sound like a woman's step. It came further down; she turned to fly.

"Jacintha!" said a deep voice, that in this stone cylinder rang like thunder from a tomb.

"Oh! saints and angels save me!" yelled Jacintha; and fell on her knees, and hid her head for security; and down went her candlestick clattering on the stone.

"Don't be a fool!" said the iron voice. "Get up and take this."

She raised her head by slow degrees, shuddering.

A man was holding out a cradle to her; the candle he carried lighted up his face; it was Colonel Raynal.

She stared at him stupidly, but never moved from her knees, and the candle began to shake violently in her hand, as she herself trembled from head to foot.

Then Raynal concluded she was in the plot; but, scorning to reproach a servant, he merely said, "Well, what do you kneel there for, gaping at me like that? Take this, I tell you, and carry it out of the house."

He shoved the cradle roughly down into her hands, then turned on his heel without a word.

Jacintha collapsed on the stairs, and the cradle beside her, for all the power was driven out of her body; she could hardly support her own weight, much less the cradle.

She rocked herself, and moaned out, "Oh, what's this? oh, what's this?"

A cold perspiration came over her whole frame.

"What could this mean? What on earth had happened?"

She took up the candle, for it was lying burning and guttering on the stairs; scraped up the grease with the snuffers, and by force of habit tried to polish it clean with a bit of paper that shook between her fingers; she did not know what she was doing. When she recovered her wits, she took the child out of the cradle, and wrapped it carefully in her shawl; then went slowly down the stairs; and holding him close to her bosom, with a furtive eye, and brain confused, and a heart like lead, stole away to the tenantless cottage, where Madame Jouvenel awaited her.

Meantime, Rose, with quaking heart, had encountered the baroness. She found her pale and agitated, and her first question was, "What is the matter? what have you been all doing over my head?"

"Darling mother," replied Rose, evasively, "something has happened that will rejoice your heart. Somebody has come home."

"My son? eh, no! impossible! We cannot be so happy."

"He will be with you directly."

The old lady now trembled with joyful agitation.

"In five minutes I will bring him to you. Shall you be dressed? I will ring for the girl to help you."

"But, Rose, the scream, and that terrible fall. Ah! where is Josephine?"

"Can't you guess, mamma? Oh, the fall was only the screen; they stumbled over it in the dark."

"They! who?"

"Colonel Raynal, and — and Edouard. I will tell you, mamma, but don't be angry, or even mention it; they wanted to surprise us. They saw a light burning, and they crept on tiptoe up to the tapestried room, where Josephine and I were, and they did give us a great fright."

"What madness!" cried the baroness, angrily; "and in Josephine's weak state! Such a surprise might have driven her into a fit."

"Yes, it was foolish, but let it pass, mamma. Don't speak of it, for he is so sorry about it."

Then Rose slipped out, ordered a fire in the *salon*, and not in the tapestried room, and the next minute was at her sister's door. There she found Raynal knocking, and asking Josephine how she was.

"Pray leave her to me a moment," said she. "I will bring her down to you. Mamma is waiting for you in the *salon*."

Raynal went down. Rose unlocked the bedroom-door, went in, and, to her horror, found Josephine lying on the floor. She dashed water in her face, and applied every remedy; and at last she came back to life, and its terrors.

"Save me, Rose! save me — he is coming to kill me — I heard him at the door," and she clung trembling piteously to Rose.

Then Rose, seeing her terror, was almost glad at the suicidal falsehood she had told. She comforted and encouraged Josephine and — deceived her. (This was the climax.)

"All is well, my poor coward," she cried; "your fears are all imaginary; another has owned the child, and the story is believed."

"Another! impossible! He would not believe it."

"He does believe it — he shall believe it."

Rose then, feeling by no means sure that Josephine, terrified as she was, would consent to let her sister come to shame to screen her, told her boldly that Jacintha had owned herself the mother of the child, and that Raynal's only feeling towards *her* was pity, and regret at having so foolishly frightened her, weakened as she was by illness. "I told him you had been ill, dear. But how came you on the ground?"

"I had come to myself; I was on my knees praying. He tapped. I heard his voice. I remember no more. I must have fainted again directly."

Rose had hard work to make her believe that her guilt, as she called it, was not known; and even then she could not prevail on her to come down-stairs, until she said, "If you don't, he will come to you." On that Josephine consented eagerly, and with trembling fingers began to adjust her hair and her dress for the interview.

All this terrible night Rose fought for her sister. She took her down-stairs to the *salon;* she put her on the sofa; she sat by her and pressed her hand constantly to give her courage. She told the story of the surprise her own way, before the whole party, including the doctor, to prevent Raynal from being called on to tell it his way. She laughed at Josephine's absurdity, but excused it on account of her feeble health. In short, she threw more and more dust in all their eyes.

But by the time when the rising sun came faintly in and lighted the haggard party, where the deceived were happy, the deceivers wretched, the supernatural strength this young girl had shown was almost exhausted. She felt an hysterical impulse to scream and weep: each minute it became more and more ungovernable. Then came an unexpected turn. Raynal after a long and tiring talk with his mother, as he called her, looked at his watch, and in a characteristic way coolly announced his immediate departure, this being the first hint he had given them that he was not come back for good.

The baroness was thunderstruck.

Rose and Josephine pressed one another's hands, and had much ado not to utter a loud cry of joy.

Raynal explained that he was the bearer of despatches. "I must be off: not an hour to lose. Don't fret, mother, I shall soon be back again, if I am not knocked on the head."

Raynal took leave of them all. When it came to Rose's turn, he drew her aside and whispered into her ear, "Who is the man?"

She started, and seemed dumfounded.

"Tell me, or I ask my wife."

"She has promised me not to betray me: I made her swear. Spare me now, brother; I will tell you all when you come back."

"That is a bargain: now hear *me* swear: he shall marry you, or he shall die by my hand."

He confirmed this by a tremendous oath.

Rose shuddered, but said nothing, only she thought to herself, "I am forewarned. Never shall you know who is the father of that child."

He was no sooner gone than the baroness insisted on knowing what this private communication between him and Rose was about.

"Oh," said Rose, "he was only telling me to keep up your courage and Josephine's till he comes back."

This was the last lie the poor entangled wretch had to tell that morning. The next minute the sisters, exhausted by their terrible struggle, went feebly, with downcast eyes, along the corridor and up the staircase to Josephine's room.

They went hand in hand. They sank down, dressed as they were, on Josephine's bed, and clung to one another and trembled together, till their exhausted natures sank into uneasy slumbers, from which each in turn would wake ever and anon with a convulsive start, and clasp her sister tighter to her breast.

Theirs was a marvellous love. Even a course of deceit had not yet prevailed to separate or chill their sister bosoms. But still in this deep and wonderful love there were degrees: one went a shade deeper than the other now — ay, since last night. Which? why, she who had sacrificed herself for the other, and dared not tell her, lest the sacrifice should be refused.

It was the gray of the morning, and foggy, when Raynal, after taking leave, went to the stable for his horse. At the stable-door he came upon a man sitting doubled up on the very stones of the yard, with his head on his knees. The figure lifted his head, and showed him the face of Edouard Riviere, white and ghastly: his hair lank with the mist, his teeth chattering with cold and misery. The poor wretch had walked frantically all night round and round the château, waiting till Raynal should come out. He told him so.

"But why didn't you? — Ah! I see. No! you could not go into the house after that. My poor fellow, there is but one thing for you to do. Turn your back on her, and forget she ever lived; she is dead to you."

"There is something to be done besides that," said Edouard, gloomily.

"What?"

"Vengeance."

"That is my affair, young man. When I come back from the Rhine, she will tell me who her seducer is. She has promised."

"And don't you see through that?" said Edouard, gnashing his teeth; "that is only to gain time: she will never tell you. She is young in years, but old in treachery."

He groaned and was silent a moment, then laying his hand on Raynal's arm said grimly, "Thank Heaven, we don't depend on her for information! I know the villain."

Raynal's eyes flashed: "Ah! then tell me this moment."

"It is that scoundrel Dujardin."

"Dujardin! What do you mean?"

"I mean that, while you were fighting for France, your house was turned into a hospital for wounded soldiers."

"And pray, sir, to what more honorable use could they put it?"

"Well, this Dujardin was housed by you, was nursed by your wife and all the family; and in return has seduced your sister, my affianced."

"I can hardly believe that. Camille Dujardin was always a man of honor, and a good soldier."

"Colonel, there has been no man near the place but this Dujardin. I tell you it is he. Don't make me tear my bleeding heart out: must I tell you how often I caught them together, how I suspected, and how she gulled me? blind fool that I was, to believe a woman's words before my own eyes. I swear to you he is the villain; the only question is, which of us two is to kill him."

"Where is the man?"

"In the army of the Rhine."

"Ah! all the better."

"Covered with glory and honor. Curse him! oh, curse him! curse him!"

"I am in luck. I am going to the Rhine."

"I know it. That is why I waited here all through this night of misery. Yes, you are in luck. But you will send me a line when you have killed him; will you not? Then I shall know joy again. Should he escape you, he shall not escape me."

"Young man," said Raynal, with dignity, "this rage is unmanly. Besides, we have not heard his side of the story. He is a good soldier; perhaps he is not all to blame: or perhaps passion has betrayed him into a sin that his conscience and honor disapprove: if so, he must not die. You think only of your wrong: it is natural: but I am the girl's brother; guardian of her honor and my own. His life is precious as gold. I shall make him marry her."

"What! reward him for his villany?" cried Edouard, frantically.

"A mighty reward," replied Raynal, with a sneer.

"You leave one thing out of the calculation, monsieur," said Edouard, trembling with anger, "that I will kill your brother-in-law at the altar, before her eyes."

"*You* leave one thing out of the calculation: that you will first have to cross swords, at the altar, with me."

"So be it. I will not draw on my old commandant. I could not; but be sure I will catch him and her alone some day, and the bride shall be a widow in her honeymoon."

"As you please," said Raynal, coolly. "That is all fair, as you have been wronged. I shall make her an honest wife, and then you may make her an honest

widow. (This is what they call *love,* and sneer at me for keeping clear of it.) But neither he nor you shall keep *my sister* what she is now, a ——," and he used a word out of camp.

Edouard winced and groaned. "Oh! don't call her by such a name. There is some mystery. She loved me once. There must have been some strange seduction."

"Now you deceive yourself," said Raynal. "I never saw a girl that could take her own part better than she can; she is not like her sister at all in character. Not that I excuse him; it was a dishonorable act, an ungrateful act to my wife and my mother."

"And to you."

"Now listen to me: in four days I shall stand before him. I shall not go into a pet like you; I am in earnest. I shall just say to him, 'Dujardin, I know all!' Then if he is guilty his face will show it directly. Then I shall say, 'Comrade, you must marry her whom you have dishonored.'"

"He will not. He is a libertine, a rascal."

"You are speaking of a man you don't know. He *will* marry her and repair the wrong he has done."

"Suppose he refuses?"

"Why should he refuse? The girl is not ugly nor old, and if she has done a folly, he was her partner in it."

"But *suppose* he refuses?"

Raynal ground his teeth. "Refuse? If he does, I'll run my sword through his carcass then and there, and the hussy shall go into a convent."

CHAPTER XXI.

The French army lay before a fortified place near the Rhine, which we will call Philipsburg.

This army knew Bonaparte by report only; it was commanded by generals of the old school.

Philipsburg was defended on three sides by the nature of the ground; but on the side that faced the French line of march there was only a zigzag wall, pierced, and a low tower or two at each of the salient angles.

There were evidences of a tardy attempt to improve the defences. In particular there was a large round bastion, about three times the height of the wall; but the masonry was new, and the very embrasures were not yet cut.

Young blood was for assaulting these equivocal fortifications at the end of the day's march that brought the French advanced guard in sight of the place; but the old generals would not hear of it; the soldiers' lives must not be flung away assaulting a place that could be reduced in twenty-one days with mathematical certainty. For at this epoch a siege was looked on as a process with a certain result, the only problem was in how many days would the place be taken; and even this they used to settle to a day or two on paper by arithmetic; so many feet of wall, and so many guns on the one side; so many guns, so many men, and such and such a soil to cut the trenches in on the other: result, two figures varying from fourteen to forty. These two figures represented the duration of the siege.

For all that, siege arithmetic, right in general, has often

been terribly disturbed by one little incident, that occurs from time to time; viz., Genius *in*side. And, indeed, this is one of the sins of genius; it goes and puts out calculations that have stood the brunt of years. Archimedes and Todleben were, no doubt, clever men in their way and good citizens, yet one characteristic of delicate men's minds they lacked — veneration; they showed a sad disrespect for the wisdom of the ancients, deranged the calculations which so much learning and patient thought had hallowed, disturbed the minds of white-haired veterans, took sieges out of the grasp of science, and plunged them back into the field of wild conjecture.

Our generals then sat down at fourteen hundred yards' distance, and planned the trenches artistically, and directed them to be cut at artful angles, and so creep nearer and nearer the devoted town. Then the Prussians, whose hearts had been in their shoes at first sight of the French shakos, plucked up, and turned not the garrison only but the population of the town into engineers and masons. Their fortifications grew almost as fast as the French trenches.

The first day of the siege, a young but distinguished brigadier in the French army rode to the quarters of General Raimbaut, who commanded his division, and was his personal friend, and respectfully but firmly entreated the general to represent to the commander-in-chief the propriety of assaulting that new bastion before it should become dangerous. "My brigade shall carry it in fifteen minutes, general," said he.

"What! cross all that open under fire? One-half your brigade would never reach the bastion."

"But the other half would take it."

"That is not so certain."

General Raimbaut refused to forward the young colonel's proposal to headquarters. "I will not subject you to *two* refusals in one matter," said he, kindly.

The young colonel lingered. He said, respectfully, "One question, general, when that bastion cuts its teeth will it be any easier to take than now?"

"Certainly; it will always be easier to take it from the sap than to cross the open under fire to it, and take it. Come, colonel, to your trenches; and if your friend should cut its teeth, you shall have a battery in your attack that will set its teeth on edge. Ha! ha!"

The young colonel did not echo his chief's humor; he saluted gravely, and returned to the trenches.

The next morning three fresh tiers of embrasures grinned one above another at the besiegers. The besieged had been up all night, and not idle. In half these apertures black muzzles showed themselves.

The bastion had cut its front teeth.

Thirteenth day of the siege.

The trenches were within four hundred yards of the enemy's guns, and it was hot work in them. The enemy had three tiers of guns in the round bastion, and on the top they had got a long 48-pounder, which they worked with a swivel joint, or the like, and threw a great roaring shot into any part of the French lines.

As to the commander-in-chief and his generals, they were dotted about a long way in the rear, and no shot came as far as them; but in the trenches the men began now to fall fast, especially on the left attack, which faced the round bastion. Our young colonel had got his heavy battery, and every now and then he would divert the general efforts of the bastion, and compel it to concentrate its attention on him, by pounding away at it till it was all in sore places. But he meant it worse mischief than that. Still, as heretofore, regarding it as the key to Philipsburg, he had got a large force of engineers at work driving a mine towards it, and to this he trusted more than to breaching it; for the bigger holes he made

in it by day were all stopped at night by the townspeople.

This colonel was not a favorite in the division to which his brigade belonged. He was a good soldier, but a dull companion. He was also accused of *hauteur* and of an unsoldierly reserve with his brother officers.

Some loose-tongued ones even called him a milk-sop, because he was constantly seen conversing with the priest — he who had nothing to say to an honest soldier.

Others said, "No, hang it, he is not a milk-sop: he is a tried soldier: he is a sulky beggar all the same." Those under his immediate command were divided in opinion about him. There was something about him they could not understand. Why was his sallow face so stern, so sad? and why with all that was his voice so gentle? somehow the few words that did fall from his mouth were prized. One old soldier used to say, "I would rather have a word from our brigadier than from the commander-in-chief." Others thought he must at some part of his career have pillaged a church, taken the altar-piece, and sold it to a picture-dealer in Paris, or whipped the earrings out of the Madonna's ears, or admitted the female enemy to quarter upon ungenerous conditions: this, or some such crime to which we poor soldiers are liable: and now was committing the mistake of remording himself about it. "Always alongside the chaplain, you see!"

This cold and silent man had won the heart of the most talkative sergeant in the French army. Sergeant La Croix protested with many oaths that all the best generals of the day had commanded him in turn, and that his present colonel was the first that had succeeded in inspiring him with unlimited confidence. "He knows every point of war — this one," said La Croix, "I heard him beg and pray for leave to storm this thundering

bastion before it was armed: but no, the old muffs would be wiser than our colonel. So now here we are kept at bay by a place that Julius Cæsar and Cannibal wouldn't have made two bites at apiece; no more would I if I was the old boy out there behind the hill." In such terms do sergeants denote commanders-in-chief — at a distance. A voluble sergeant has more influence with the men than the minister of war is perhaps aware: on the whole, the 24th brigade would have followed its gloomy colonel to grim death and a foot farther. One thing gave these men a touch of superstitious reverence for their commander. He seemed to them free from physical weakness. He never *sat down* to dinner, and seemed never to sleep. At no hour of the day or night were the sentries safe from his visits.

Very annoying. But, after awhile, it led to keen watchfulness: the more so that the sad and gloomy colonel showed by his manner he appreciated it. Indeed, one night he even opened his marble jaws, and told Sergeant La Croix that a watchful sentry was an important soldier, not to his brigade only, but to the whole army. Judge whether the maxim and the implied encomium did not circulate next morning, with additions.

Sixteenth day of the siege. The round bastion opened fire at eight o'clock, not on the opposing battery, but on the right of the French attack. Its advanced position enabled a portion of its guns to rake these trenches slant-wise: and depressing its guns it made the round shot strike the ground first and *ricochet* over.

On this our colonel opened on them with all his guns: one of these he served himself. Among his other warlike accomplishments, he was a wonderful shot with a cannon. He showed them capital practice this morning: drove two embrasures into one, and knocked about a ton of masonry off the parapet. Then taking advantage of

this, he served two of his guns with grape, and swept the enemy off the top of the bastion, and kept it clear. He made it so hot they could not work the upper guns. Then they turned the other two tiers all upon him, and at it both sides went ding, dong, till the guns were too hot to be worked. So then Sergeant La Croix popped his head up from the battery, and showed the enemy a great white plate. This was meant to convey to them an invitation to dine with the French army: the other side of the table of course.

To the credit of Prussian intelligence be it recorded, that this pantomimic hint was at once taken and both sides went to dinner.

The fighting colonel, however, remained in the battery, and kept a detachment of his gunners employed cooling the guns and repairing the touch-holes. He ordered his two cutlets and his glass of water into the battery.

Meantime, the enemy fired a single gun at long intervals, as much as to say, "We had the last word."

Let trenches be cut ever so artfully, there will be a little space exposed here and there at the angles. These spaces the men are ordered to avoid, or whip quickly across them into cover.

Now the enemy had just got the range of one of these places with their solitary gun, and had already dropped a couple of shot right on to it. A camp follower with a tray, two cutlets, and a glass of water, came to this open space just as a puff of white smoke burst from the bastion. Instead of instantly seeking shelter till the shot had struck, he, in his inexperience, thought the shot must have struck, and all danger be over. He stayed there mooning instead of pelting under cover: the shot (eighteen-pound) struck him right on the breast, knocked him into spilikins, and sent the mutton cutlets flying.

The human fragments lay quiet, ten yards off. But a

soldier that was eating his dinner kicked it over, and jumped up at the side of "Death's Alley" (as it was christened next minute), and danced and yelled with pain.

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared a soldier from the other side of the alley.

"What is that?" cried Sergeant La Croix. "What do you laugh at, Private Cadel?" said he sternly, for, though he was too far in the trench to see, he had heard that horrible sound a soldier knows from every other, the "thud" of a round shot striking man or horse.

"Sergeant," said Cadel, respectfully, "I laugh to see Private Dard, that got the wind of the shot, dance and sing, when the man that got the shot itself does not say a word."

"The wind of the shot, you rascal!" roared Private Dard: "look here!" and he showed the blood running down his face.

The shot had actually driven a splinter of bone out of the sutler into Dard's temple.

"I am the unluckiest fellow in the army," remonstrated Dard: and he stamped in a circle.

"Seems to me you are only the second unluckiest this time," said a young soldier with his mouth full; and, with a certain dry humor, he pointed vaguely over his shoulder with the fork towards the corpse.

The trenches laughed and assented.

This want of sympathy and justice irritated Dard. "You cursed fools!" cried he. "He is gone where we must all go — without any trouble. But look at me. I am always getting *barked*. Dogs of Prussians! they pick me out among a thousand. I shall have a headache all the afternoon, you see else."

Some of our heads would never have ached again: but Dard had a good thick skull.

Dard pulled out his spilikin savagely.

"I'll wrap it up in paper for Jacintha," said he. "Then that will learn her what a poor soldier has to go through."

Even this consolation was denied Private Dard.

Corporal Coriolanus Gand, a bit of an infidel from Lyons, who sometimes amused himself with the Breton's superstition, told him with a grave face, that the splinter belonged not to him, but to the sutler, and, though so small, was doubtless a necessary part of his frame.

"If you keep that, it will be a bone of contention between you two," said he; "especially at midnight. *He will be always coming back to you for it.*"

"There, take it away!" said the Breton hastily, "and bury it with the poor fellow."

Sergeant La Croix presented himself before the colonel with a rueful face and saluted him and said, "Colonel, I beg a thousand pardons; your dinner has been spilt — a shot from the bastion."

"No matter," said the colonel. "Give me a piece of bread instead."

La Croix went for it himself, and on his return found Cadel sitting on one side of Death's Alley, and Dard with his head bound up on the other. They had got a bottle which each put up in turn wherever he fancied the next round shot would strike, and they were betting their afternoon rations which would get the Prussians to hit the bottle first.

La Croix pulled both their ears playfully.

"Time is up for playing marbles," said he. "Be off, and play at duty," and he bundled them into the battery.

It was an hour past midnight: a cloudy night. The moon was up, but seen only by fitful gleams. A calm, peaceful silence reigned.

Dard was sentinel in the battery.

An officer going his rounds found the said sentinel flat instead of vertical. He stirred him with his scabbard, and up jumped Dard.

"It's all right, sergeant. O Lord! it's the colonel. I wasn't asleep, colonel."

"I have not accused you. But you will explain what you were doing."

"Colonel," said Dard, all in a flutter, "I was taking a squint at them, because I saw something. The beggars are building a wall, now."

"Where?"

"Between us and the bastion."

"Show me."

"I can't, colonel; the moon has gone in; but I did see it."

"How long was it?"

"About a hundred yards."

"How high?"

"Colonel, it was ten feet high if it was an inch."

"Have you good sight?"

"La! colonel, wasn't I a bit of a poacher before I took to the bayonet?"

"Good! Now reflect. If you persist in this statement, I turn out the brigade on your information."

"I'll stand the fire of a corporal's guard at break of day if I make a mistake now," said Dard.

The colonel glided away, called his captain and first lieutenants, and said two words in each ear, that made them spring off their backs.

Dard, marching to an fro, musket on shoulder, found himself suddenly surrounded by grim, silent, but deadly eager soldiers, that came pouring like bees into the open space behind the battery. The officers came round the colonel.

"Attend to two things," said he to the captains. "Don't fire till they are within ten yards: and don't follow them unless I lead you."

The men were then told off by companies, some to the battery, some to the trenches, some were kept on each side Death's Alley, ready for a rush.

They were not all of them in position, when those behind the parapet saw, as it were, something deepen the gloom of night, some fourscore yards to the front: it was like a line of black ink suddenly drawn upon a sheet covered with Indian ink.

It seems quite stationary. The novices wondered what it was. The veterans muttered — "Three deep."

Though it looked stationary, it got blacker and blacker. The soldiers of the 24th brigade griped their muskets hard, and set their teeth, and the sergeants had much ado to keep them quiet.

All of a sudden, a loud yell on the right of the brigade, two or three single shots from the trenches in that direction, followed by a volley, the cries of wounded men, and the fierce hurrahs of an attacking party.

Our colonel knew too well those sounds: the next parallel had been surprised, and the Prussian bayonet was now silently at work.

Disguise was now impossible. At the first shot, a guttural voice in front of Dujardin's men was heard to give a word of command. There was a sharp rattle and in a moment the thick black line was tipped with glittering steel.

A roar and a rush, and the Prussian line three deep came furiously like a huge steel-pointed wave, at the French lines. A tremendous wave of fire rushed out to meet that wave of steel: a crash of two hundred muskets, and all was still. Then you could see through the black steel-tipped line in a hundred frightful gaps, and the

ground sparkled with bayonets and the air rang with the cries of the wounded.

A tremendous cheer from the brigade, and the colonel charged at the head of his column, out by Death's Alley.

The broken wall was melting away into the night. The colonel wheeled his men to the right: one company, led by the impetuous young Captain Jullien, followed the flying enemy.

The other attack had been only too successful. They shot the sentries, and bayoneted many of the soldiers in their tents: others escaped by running to the rear, and some into the next parallel.

Several, half dressed, snatched up their muskets, killed one Prussian, and fell riddled like sieves.

A gallant officer got a company together into the place of arms and formed in line.

Half the Prussian force went at them, the rest swept the trenches: the French company delivered a deadly volley, and the next moment clash the two forces crossed bayonets, and a silent deadly stabbing match was played: the final result of which was inevitable. The Prussians were five to one. The gallant officer and the poor fellows who did their duty so stoutly, had no thought left but to die hard, when suddenly a roaring cheer seemed to come from the rear rank of the enemy. "France! France!" Half the 24th brigade came leaping and swarming over the trenches in the Prussian rear. The Prussians wavered. "France!" cried the little party that were being overpowered, and charged in their turn with such fury that in two seconds the two French corps went through the enemy's centre like paper, and their very bayonets clashed together in more than one Prussian body.

Broken thus in two fragments the Prussian corps

ceased to exist as a military force. The men fled each his own way back to the fort, and many flung away their muskets, for French soldiers were swarming in from all quarters. At this moment, bang! bang! bang! from the bastion.

"They are firing on my brigade," said our colonel. "Who has led his company there against my orders? Captain Neville, into the battery, and fire twenty rounds at the bastion! Aim at the flashes from their middle tier."

"Yes, colonel."

The battery opened with all its guns on the bastion. The right attack followed suit. The town answered, and a furious cannonade roared and blazed all down both lines till daybreak. Hell seemed broken loose.

Captain Jullien had followed the flying foe: but could not come up with them: and, as the enemy had prepared for every contingency, the fatal bastion, after first throwing a rocket or two to discover their position, poured showers of grape into them, killed many, and would have killed more but that Captain Neville and his gunners happened by mere accident to dismount one gun and to kill a couple of gunners at the others. This gave the remains of the company time to disperse and run back. When the men were mustered, Captain Jullien and twenty-five of his company did not answer to their names. At daybreak they were visible from the trenches lying all by themselves within eighty yards of the bastion.

A flag of truce came from the fort: the dead were removed on both sides and buried. Some Prussian officers strolled into the French lines. Civilities and cigars exchanged: "*Bon jour*," "*Gooten daeg:*" then at it again, ding dong all down the line blazing and roaring.

At twelve o'clock the besieged had got a man on horse-

back, on top of a hill, with colored flags in his hand, making signals.

"What are you up to now?" inquired Dard.

"You will see," said La Croix, affecting mystery; he knew no more than the other.

Presently off went Long Tom on the top of the bastion, and the shot came roaring over the heads of the speakers.

The flags were changed, and off went Long Tom again at an elevation.

Ten seconds had scarcely elapsed when a tremendous explosion took place on the French right. Long Tom was throwing red-hot shot; one had fallen on a powder wagon, and blown it to pieces, and killed two poor fellows and a horse, and turned an artillery man at some distance into a seeming nigger, but did him no great harm; only took him three days to get the powder out of his clothes with pipe clay, and off his face with raw potato-peel.

When the tumbril exploded, the Prussians could be heard to cheer, and they turned to and fired every iron spout they owned. Long Tom worked all day.

They got into a corner where the guns of the battery could not hit them or him, and there was his long muzzle looking towards the sky, and sending half a hundredweight of iron up into the clouds, and plunging down a mile off into the French lines.

And, at every shot, the man on horseback made signals to let the gunners know where the shot fell.

At last, about four in the afternoon, they threw a forty-eight-pound shot slap into the commander-in-chief's tent, a mile and a half behind trenches.

Down comes a glittering aide-de-camp as hard as he can gallop.

"Colonel Dujardin, what are you about, sir? *Your*

bastion has thrown a round shot into the commander-in-chief's tent."

The colonel did not appear so staggered as the aide-de-camp expected.

"Ah, indeed!" said he quietly. "I observed they were trying distances."

"Must not happen again, colonel. You must drive them from the gun."

"How?"

"Why, where is the difficulty?"

"If you will do me the honor to step into the battery, I will show you," said the colonel.

"If you please," said the aide-de-camp stiffly.

Colonel Dujardin took him to the parapet, and began, in a calm, painstaking way, to show him how and why none of his guns could be brought to bear upon Long Tom.

In the middle of the explanation a melodious sound was heard in the air above them, like a swarm of Brobdingnag bees.

"What is that?" inquired the aide-de-camp.

"What? I see nothing."

"That humming noise."

"Oh, that? Prussian bullets. Ah, by-the-by, it is a compliment to your uniform, monsieur; they take you for some one of importance. Well, as I was observing" —

"Your explanation is sufficient, colonel; let us get out of this. Ha, ha! you are a cool hand, colonel, I must say. But your battery is a warm place enough: I shall report it so at headquarters."

The grim colonel relaxed.

"Captain," said he politely, "you shall not have ridden to my post in vain. Will you lend me your horse for ten minutes?"

"Certainly; and I will inspect your trenches meantime."

"Do so; oblige me by avoiding that angle; it is exposed, and the enemy have got the range to an inch."

Colonel Dujardin slipped into his quarters; off with his half-dress jacket and his dirty boots, and presently out he came full fig, glittering brighter than the other, with one French and two foreign orders shining on his breast, mounted the aide-de-camp's horse, and away full pelt.

Admitted, after some delay, into the generalissimo's tent, Dujardin found the old gentleman surrounded by his staff and wroth: nor was the danger to which he had been exposed his sole cause of ire.

The shot had burst through his canvas, struck a table on which was a large inkstand, and had squirted the whole contents over the despatches he was writing for Paris.

Now this old gentleman prided himself upon the neatness of his despatches: a blot on his paper darkened his soul.

Colonel Dujardin expressed his profound regret. The commander, however, continued to remonstrate. "I have a great deal of writing to do," said he, "as you must be aware; and, when I am writing, I expect to be quiet."

Colonel Dujardin assented respectfully to the justice of this. He then explained at full length why he could not bring a gun in the battery to silence "Long Tom," and quietly asked to be permitted to run a gun out of the trenches, and take a shot at the offender.

"It is a point-blank distance, and I have a new gun, with which a man ought to be able to hit his own ball at three hundred yards."

The commander hesitated.

"I cannot have the men exposed."

"I engage not to lose a man — except him who fires the gun. *He* must take his chance."

"Well, colonel, it must be done by volunteers. The men must not be *ordered* out on such a service as that."

Colonel Dujardin bowed, and retired.

"Volunteers to go out of the trenches!" cried Sergeant La Croix, in a stentorian voice, standing erect as a poker, and swelling with importance.

There were fifty offers in less than as many seconds.

"Only twelve allowed to go," said the sergeant; "and I am one," added he, adroitly inserting himself.

A gun was taken down, placed on a carriage, and posted near Death's Alley, but out of the line of fire.

The colonel himself superintended the loading of this gun; and to the surprise of the men had the shot weighed first, and then weighed out the powder himself.

He then waited quietly a long time till the bastion pitched one of its periodical shots into Death's Alley; but no sooner had the shot struck, and sent the sand flying past the two lanes of curious noses, than Colonel Dujardin jumped upon the gun and waved his cocked hat. At this preconcerted signal, his battery opened fire on the bastion, and the battery to his right opened on the wall that fronted them; and the colonel gave the word to run the gun out of the trenches. They ran it out into the cloud of smoke their own guns were belching forth, unseen by the enemy; but they had no sooner twisted it into the line of Long Tom, than the smoke was gone, and there they were, a fair mark.

"Back into the trenches, all but one!" roared Dujardin.

And in they ran like rabbits.

"Quick! the elevation."

Colonel Dujardin and La Croix raised the muzzle to the mark — hoo, hoo, hoo! ping, ping, ping! came the bullets about their ears.

"Away with you!" cried the colonel, taking the linstock from him.

Then Colonel Dujardin, fifteen yards from the trenches, in full blazing uniform, showed two armies what one intrepid soldier can do. He kneeled down and adjusted his gun, just as he would have done in a practising ground. He had a pot shot to take, and a pot shot he would take. He ignored three hundred muskets that were levelled at him. He looked along his gun, adjusted it, and re-adjusted it to a hair's breadth. The enemy's bullets pattered upon it: still he adjusted it delicately. His men were groaning and tearing their hair inside at his danger.

At last it was levelled to his mind, and then his movements were as quick as they had hitherto been slow. In a moment he stood erect in the half-fencing attitude of a gunner, and his linstock at the touch-hole: a huge tongue of flame, a volume of smoke, a roar, and the iron thunderbolt was on its way, and the colonel walked haughtily but rapidly back to the trenches; for in all this no bravado. He was there to make a shot; not to throw a chance of life away watching the effect.

Ten thousand eyes did that for him.

Both French and Prussians risked their own lives craning out to see what a colonel in full uniform was doing under fire from a whole line of forts, and what would be his fate; but when he fired the gun their curiosity left the man and followed the iron thunderbolt.

For two seconds all was uncertain; the ball was travelling.

Tom gave a rear like a wild horse, his protruding muzzle went up sky-high, then was seen no more, and a

ring of old iron and a clatter of fragments was heard on the top of the bastion. Long Tom was dismounted. Oh! the roar of laughter and triumph from one end to another of the trenches; and the clapping of forty thousand hands that went on for full five minutes; then the Prussians, either through a burst of generous praise for an act so chivalrous and so brilliant, or because they would not be crowed over, clapped their ten thousand hands as loudly, and thus thundering, heart-thrilling salvo of applause answered salvo on both sides that terrible arena.

That evening came a courteous and flattering message from the commander-in-chief to Colonel Dujardin; and several officers visited his quarters to look at him; they went back disappointed. The cry was, "What a miserable, melancholy dog! I expected to see a fine, dashing fellow."

The trenches neared the town. Colonel Dujardin's mine was far advanced; the end of the chamber was within a few yards of the bastion. Of late, the colonel had often visited this mine in person. He seemed a little uneasy about something in that quarter; but no one knew what: he was a silent man. The third evening, after he dismounted Long Tom, he received private notice that an order was coming down from the commander-in-chief to assault the bastion. He shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing. That same night the colonel and one of his lieutenants stole out of the trenches, and by the help of a pitch-dark, windy night, got under the bastion unperceived, and crept round it, and made their observations, and got safe back. About noon down came General Raimbaut.

"Well, colonel, you are to have your way at last. Your bastion is to be stormed this afternoon previous to

the general assault. Why, how is this ? you don't seem enchanted ? "

"I am not."

"Why, it was you who pressed for the assault."

"At the right time, general, not the wrong. In five days I undertake to blow that bastion into the air. To assault it now would be to waste our men."

General Raimbaut thought this excess of caution a great piece of perversity in Achilles. They were alone, and he said a little peevishly, —

"Is not this to blow hot and cold on the same thing?"

"No, general," was the calm reply. "Not on the same thing. I blew hot upon timorous counsels ; I blow cold on rash ones. General, last night Lieutenant Fleming and I were under that bastion ; and all round it."

"Ah ! my prudent colonel, I thought we should not talk long without your coming out in your true light. If ever a man secretly enjoyed risking his life, it is you."

"No, general," said Dujardin looking gloomily down ; "I enjoy neither that nor anything else. Live or die, it is all one to me ; but to the lives of my soldiers I am not indifferent, and never will be while I live. My apparent rashness of last night was pure prudence."

Raimbaut's eye twinkled with suppressed irony. "No doubt !" said he ; "no doubt !"

The impassive colonel would not notice the other's irony ; he went calmly on : —

"I suspected something ; I went to confute, or confirm that suspicion. I confirmed it."

Rat ! tat ! tat ! tat ! tat ! tat ! tat ! was heard a drum. Relieving guard in the mine.

Colonel Dujardin interrupted himself.

"That comes *apropos*," said he. "I expect one proof more from that quarter. Sergeant, send me the sentinel they are relieving."

Sergeant La Croix soon came back, as pompous as a hen with one chick, predominating with a grand military air over a droll figure that chattered with cold, and held its musket in hands clothed in great mittens. Dard.

La Croix marched him up as if he had been a file; halted him like a file, sang out to him as to a file, stentorian and unintelligible, after the manner of sergeants.

"Private No. 4."

Dard. P-p-p-present!

La Croix. Advance to the word of command, and speak to the colonel.

The shivering figure became an upright statue directly, and carried one of his mittens to his forehead. Then, suddenly recognizing the rank of the gray-haired officer, he was morally shaken, but remained physically erect, and stammered, —

"Colonel! — general! — colonel!"

"Don't be frightened, my lad. But look at the general and answer me."

"Yes! general! colonel!" and he levelled his eye dead at the general, as he would a bayonet at a foe, being so commanded.

"Now answer in as few syllables as you can."

"Yes! general — colonel."

"You have been on guard in the mine."

"Yes, general."

"What did you see there?"

"Nothing; it was night down there."

"What did you feel?"

"Cold! I — was — in — water — hugh!"

"Did you hear nothing, then?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Bum! bum! bum!"

"Are you sure you did not hear particles of earth fall at the end of the trench?"

"I think it did, and this (touching his musket) sounded of its own accord."

"Good! you have answered well; go."

"Sergeant, I did not miss a word," cried Dard, exulting. He thought he had passed a sort of military college examination. The sergeant was awe-struck and disgusted at his familiarity, speaking to him before the great: he pushed Private Dard hastily out of the presence, and bundled him into the trenches.

"Are you countermined, then?" asked General Raimbaut.

"I think not, general; but the whole bastion is. And we found it had been opened in the rear, and lately half a dozen broad roads cut through the masonry."

"To let in re-enforcements?"

"Or to let the men run out in case of an assault. I have seen from the first an able hand behind that part of the defences. If we assault the bastion, they will pick off as many of us as they can with their muskets; then they will run for it, and fire a train, and blow it and us into the air."

"Colonel, this is serious. Are you prepared to lay this statement before the commander-in-chief?"

"I am, and I do so through you, the general of my division. I even beg you to say, as from me, that the assault will be mere suicide — bloody and useless."

General Raimbaut went off to headquarters in some haste, a thorough convert to Colonel Dujardin's opinion. Meantime the colonel went slowly to his tent. At the mouth of it a corporal, who was also his body-servant, met him, saluted, and asked respectfully if there were any orders.

"A few minutes' repose, François, that is all. Do not let me be disturbed for an hour."

"Attention!" cried François. "Colonel wants to sleep."

The tent was sentinelled, and Dujardin was alone with the past.

Then had the fools, that took (as fools will do) deep sorrow for sullenness, seen the fiery soldier droop, and his wan face fall into haggard lines, and his martial figure shrink, and heard his stout heart sigh! He took a letter from his bosom: it was almost worn to pieces. He had read it a thousand times, yet he read it again. A part of the sweet sad words ran thus: —

"We must bow. We can never be happy together on earth; let us make Heaven our friend. This is still left us, — not to blush for our love; to do our duty, and to die."

"How tender, but how firm," thought Camille. "I might agitate, taunt, grieve her I love, but I could not shake her. No! God and the saints to my aid! they saved me from a crime I now shudder at. And they have given me the good chaplain: he prays with me, he weeps for me. His prayers still my beating heart. Yes, poor suffering angel! I read your will in these tender, but bitter, words: you prefer duty to love. And one day you will forget me; not yet awhile, but it will be so. It wounds me when I think of it, but I must bow. Your will is sacred. I must rise to your level, not drag you to mine."

Then the soldier that had stood between two armies in a hail of bullets, and fired a master-shot, took a little book of offices in one hand, — the chaplain had given it him, — and fixed his eyes upon the pious words, and clung like a child to the pious words, and kissed his lost wife's letter, and tried hard to be like her he loved: patient, very patient, till the end should come.

"*Qui vive?*" cried the sentinel outside to a strange officer.

"France," was his reply. He then asked the sentinel, "Where is the colonel commanding the brigade?"

The sentinel lowered his voice, "Asleep, my officer," said he; for the new-comer carried two epaulets.

"Wake him," said the officer in a tone of a man used to command on a large scale.

Dujardin heard, and did not choose a stranger should think he was asleep in broad day. He came hastily out of the tent, therefore, with Josephine's letter in his hand, and, in the very act of conveying it to his bosom, found himself face to face with — her husband.

Did you ever see two duellists cross rapiers?

How unlike a theatrical duel! How smooth and quiet the bright blades are! they glide into contact. They are polished and slippery, yet they hold each other. So these two men's eyes met, and fastened: neither spoke: each searched the other's face keenly. Raynal's countenance, prepared as he was for this meeting, was like a stern statue's. The other's face flushed, and his heart raged and sickened at sight of the man, that, once his comrade and benefactor, was now possessor of the woman he loved. But the figures of both stood alike haughty, erect, and immovable, face to face.

Colonel Raynal saluted Colonel Dujardin ceremoniously. Colonel Dujardin returned the salute in the same style.

"You thought I was in Egypt," said Raynal with grim significance that caught Dujardin's attention, though he did not know quite how to interpret it.

He answered mechanically, "Yes, I did."

"I am sent here by General Bonaparte to take a command," explained Raynal.

"You are welcome. What command?"

"Yours."

"Mine?" cried Dujardin, his forehead flushing with mortification and anger. "What, is it not enough that you take my" — He stopped then.

"Come, colonel," said the other calmly, "do not be unjust to an old comrade. I take your demi-brigade; but you are promoted to Raimbaut's brigade. The exchange is to be made to-morrow."

"Was it then to announce to me my promotion you came to my quarters?" and Camille looked with a strange mixture of feelings at his old comrade.

"That was the first thing, being duty, you know."

"What? have you anything else to say to me, then?"

"I have."

"Is it important? for my own duties will soon demand me."

"It is so important that, command or no command, I should have come further than the Rhine to say it to you."

Let a man be as bold as a lion, a certain awe still waits upon doubt and mystery; and some of this vague awe crept over Camille Dujardin at Raynal's mysterious speech, and his grave, quiet, significant manner.

Had he discovered something, and what? For Josephine's sake, more than his own, Camille was on his guard directly.

Raynal looked at him in silence a moment.

"What?" said he with a slight sneer, "has it never occurred to you that I *must* have a serious word to say to you? First, let me put you a question: did they treat you well at my house? at the château de Beaurepaire?"

"Yes," faltered Camille.

"You met, I trust, all the kindness and care due to a wounded soldier and an officer of merit. It would annoy me greatly if I thought you were not treated like a brother in my house."

Colonel Dujardin writhed inwardly at this view of matters. He could not reply in few words. This made him hesitate.

His inquisitor waited, but, receiving no reply, went on, "Well, colonel, have you shown the sense of gratitude we had a right to look for in return? In a word, when you left Beaurepaire, had your conscience nothing to reproach you with?"

Dujardin still hesitated. He scarcely knew what to think or what to say. But he thought to himself, "Who has told him? does he know all?"

"Colonel Dujardin, I am the husband of Josephine, the son of Madame de Beaurepaire, and the brother of Rose. You know very well what brings me here. Your answer?"

"Colonel Raynal, between men of honor, placed as you and I are, few words should pass, for words are idle. You will never prove to me that I have wronged you: I shall never convince you that I have not. Let us therefore close this painful interview in the way it is sure to close. I am at your service, at any hour and place you please."

"And pray is that all the answer you can think of?" asked Raynal somewhat scornfully.

"Why, what other answer can I give you?"

"A more sensible, a more honest, and a less boyish one. Who doubts that you can fight, you silly fellow? haven't I seen you? I want you to show me a much higher sort of courage: the courage to repair a wrong, not the paltry valor to defend one."

"I really do not understand you, sir. How can I undo what is done?"

"Why, of course you cannot. And therefore I stand here ready to forgive all that is past; not without a struggle, which you don't seem to appreciate."

Camille was now utterly mystified. Raynal continued, "But of course it is upon condition that you consent to heal the wound you have made. If you refuse — hum! but you will not refuse."

"But what is it you require of me?" inquired Camille impatiently.

"Only a little common honesty. This is the case: you have seduced a young lady."

"Sir!" cried Camille angrily.

"What is the matter? The word is not so bad as the crime, I take it. You have seduced her, and under circumstances — But we won't speak of them, because I am resolved to keep cool. Well, sir, as you said just now, it's no use crying over spilled milk; you can't unseduce the little fool; so you must marry her."

"M—m—marry her?" and Dujardin flushed all over, and his heart beat, and he stared in Raynal's face.

"Why, what is the matter again? If she has played the fool, it was with you, and no other man: it is not as if she was depraved. Come, my lad, show a little generosity! Take the consequences of your own act — or your share of it — don't throw it all on the poor feeble woman. If she has loved you too much, you are the man of all others that should forgive her. Come, what do you say?"

This was too much for Camille; that Raynal should come and demand of him to marry his own wife, for so he understood the proposal. He stared at Raynal in silence ever so long, and even when he spoke it was only to mutter, "Are you out of your senses, or am I?"

At this it cost Raynal a considerable effort to restrain his wrath. However, he showed himself worthy of the office he had undertaken. He contained himself, and submitted to argue the matter. "Why, colonel," said he, "is it such a misfortune to marry poor Rose? She is young, she is lovely, she has many good qualities, and she would have walked straight to the end of her days but for you."

Now here was another surprise for Dujardin, another mystification.

"Rose de Beaurepaire?" said he, putting his hand to his head, as if to see whether his reason was still there.

"Yes, Rose de Beaurepaire — Rose Dujardin that ought to be, and that is to be, if you please."

"One word, monsieur: is it of Rose we have been talking all this time?"

Raynal nearly lost his temper at this question, and the cold, contemptuous tone with which it was put; but he gulped down his ire.

"It is," said he.

"One question more. Did she tell you I had — I had" —

"Why, as to that, she was in no condition to deny she had fallen, poor girl; the evidence was too strong. She did not reveal her seducer's name; but I had not far to go for that."

"One question more," said Dujardin, with a face of anguish. "Is it Jos— is it Madame Raynal's wish I should marry her sister?"

"Why, of course," said Raynal, in all sincerity, assuming that naturally enough as a matter of course; "if you have any respect for *her* feelings, look on me as her envoy in this matter."

At this Camille turned sick with disgust; then rage and bitterness swelled his heart. A furious impulse seized him to expose Josephine on the spot. He overcame that, however, and merely said, "She wishes me to marry her sister, does she? very well then, I decline."

Raynal was shocked. "Oh," said he, sorrowfully, "I cannot believe this of you; such heartlessness as this is not written in your face; it is contradicted by your past actions."

"I refuse," said Dujardin, hastily; and to tell the

truth, not sorry to inflict some pain on the honest soldier who had unintentionally driven the iron so deep into his own soul.

"And I," said Raynal, losing his temper, "insist, in the name of my dear Josephine" —

"Perdition!" snarled Dujardin, losing his self-command in turn.

"And of the whole family."

"And I tell you I will never marry her. Upon my honor, never."

"Your honor! you have none. The only question is would you rather marry her — or die."

"Die, to be sure."

"Then die you shall."

"Ah!" said Dujardin; "did I not tell you we were wasting time?"

"Let us waste no more then. *When* and *where?*"

"At the rear of the commander-in-chief's tent; when you like."

"This afternoon, then — at five."

"At five."

"Seconds?"

"What for?"

"You are right. They are only in the way of men who carry sabres; and besides the less gossip the better. Good-by, till five," and the two saluted one another with grim ceremony; and Raynal turned on his heel.

Camille stood transfixed; a fierce, guilty joy throbbed in his heart. His rival had quarrelled with him, had insulted him, had challenged him. It was not his fault. The sun shone bright now upon his cold despair. An hour ago life offered nothing. A few hours more, and then joy beyond expression, or an end of all. Death or Josephine! Then he remembered that this very Josephine wished to marry him to Rose. Then he

remembered Raynal had saved his life. Cold chills crossed his breaking heart. Of all that could happen to him death alone seemed a blessing without alloy.

He stood there so torn with conflicting passions, that he noted neither the passing hours nor the flying bullets.

He was only awakened from his miserable trance by the even tread of soldiers marching towards him; he looked up and there were several officers coming along the edge of the trench, escorted by a corporal's guard.

He took a step or two to meet them. After the usual salutes, one of the three colonels delivered a large paper, with a large seal, to Dujardin. He read it out to his captains and lieutenants, who had assembled at sight of the cocked hats and full uniforms.

"Attack by the army to-morrow upon all the lines. Attack of the bastion St. André this evening. The 22d, the 24th, and 12th brigades will furnish the contingents; the operation will be conducted by one of the colonels of the second division, to be appointed by General Raimbaut."

"Aha!" sounded a voice like a trombone at the reader's elbow. "I am just in the nick of time. When, colonel, when?"

"At five this evening, Colonel Raynal."

"There," said Raynal, in a half-whisper, to Dujardin; "could they choose no hour but that?"

"Do not be uneasy," replied Dujardin, under his breath. He explained aloud — "the assault will not take place, gentlemen; the bastion is mined."

"What of that? half of them are mined. We will take our engineers in with us," said Raynal.

"Such an assault will be a useless massacre," resumed Dujardin. "I reconnoitred the bastion last night, and saw their preparations for blowing us to the devil; and General Raimbaut, at my request, is even

now presenting my remarks to the commander-in-chief, and enforcing them. There will be no assault. In a day or two we shall blow the bastion, mines, and all into the air."

At this moment Raynal caught sight of a gray-haired officer coming at some distance. "There *is* General Raimbaut," said he. "I will go and pay my respects to him." General Raimbaut shook his hand warmly, and welcomed him to the army. They were old and warm friends. "And you are come at the right time," said he. "It will soon be as hot here as in Egypt."

Raynal laughed and said all the better.

General Raimbaut now joined the group of officers, and entered at once in the business which had brought him. Addressing himself to Colonel Dujardin, first he informs that officer he had presented his observations to the commander-in-chief, who had given them the attention they merited.

Colonel Dujardin bowed.

"But," continued General Raimbaut, "they are overruled by imperious circumstances, some of which he did not reveal; they remain in his own breast. However, on the eve of a general attack, which he cannot postpone, that bastion must be disarmed, otherwise it would be too fatal to all the storming parties. It is a painful necessity." He added, "Tell Colonel Dujardin I count greatly on the courage and discipline of his brigade, and on his own wise measures."

Colonel Dujardin bowed. Then he whispered in the other's ear, "Both will alike be wasted."

The other colonels waved their hats in triumph at the commander-in-chief's decision, and Raynal's face showed he looked on Dujardin as a sort of spoil-sport happily defeated.

"Well, then, gentlemen," said General Raimbaut, "we

begin by settling the contingents to be furnished by your several brigades. Say, an equal number from each. The sum total shall be settled by Colonel Dujardin, who has so long and ably baffled the bastion at this post."

Colonel Dujardin bowed stiffly and not very graciously. In his heart he despised these old fogies, compounds of timidity and rashness.

"So, how many men in all, colonel?" asked General Raimbaut.

"The fewer the better," replied the other solemnly, "since" — and then discipline tied his tongue.

"I understand you," said the old man. "Shall we say eight hundred men?"

"I should prefer three hundred. They have made a back door to the bastion, and the means of flight at hand will put flight into their heads. They will pick off some of our men as we go at them. When the rest jump in they will jump out, and" — He paused.

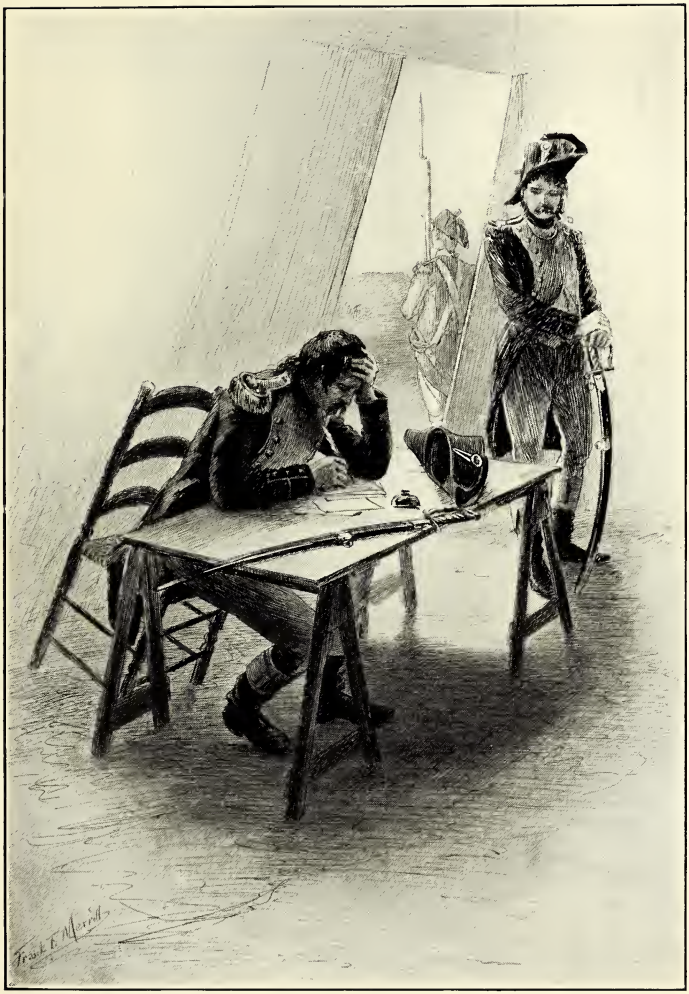
"Why, he knows all about it before it comes," said one of the colonels naïvely.

"I do. I see the whole operation and its result before me, as I see this hand. Three hundred men will do."

"But, general," objected Raynal, "you are not beginning at the beginning. The first thing in these cases is to choose the officer to command the storming party."

"Yes, Raynal, unquestionably; but you must be aware that is a painful and embarrassing part of my duty, especially after Colonel Dujardin's remarks."

"Ah, bah!" cried Raynal. "He is prejudiced. He has been digging a thundering long mine here, and now you are going to make his child useless. We none of us like that. But when he gets the colors in his hand, and the storming column at his back, his misgivings will all go to the wind, and the enemy after them, *unless he has*



WHAT HE WROTE RAN THUS, —

been committing some crime, and is very much changed from what I knew him four years ago."

"Colonel Raynal," said one of the other colonels, politely but firmly, "pray do not assume that Colonel Dujardin is to lead the column; there are three other claimants. General Raimbaut is to select from us four."

"Yes, gentlemen, and in a service of this kind I would feel grateful to you all if you would relieve me of that painful duty."

"Gentlemen," said Dujardin, with an imperceptible sneer, "the general means to say this: the operation is so glorious that he could hardly without partiality assign the command to either of us four claimants. Well, then, let us cast lots."

The proposal was received by acclamation.

"The general will mark a black cross on one lot, and he who draws it wins the command."

The young colonels prepared their lots with almost boyish eagerness. These fiery spirits were sick to death of lying and skulking in the trenches. They flung their lots into the hat. After them, who should approach the hat, lot in hand, but Raynal. Dujardin instantly interfered, and held his arm as he was in the act of dropping in his lot.

"What is the matter?" said Raynal, sharply.

"This is our affair, Colonel Raynal. You have no command in this army."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I have yours."

"Not till to-morrow."

"Why, you would not take such a pettifogging advantage of an old comrade as that."

"Tell him the day ends at twelve o'clock," said one of the colonels interested by this strange strife.

"Ah!" cried Raynal, triumphantly; "but no," said he, altering his tone, "let us leave that sort of argument

to lawyers. I have come a good many miles to fight with you, general; and now you must decide to pay me this little compliment on my arrival, or put a bitter affront on me — choose!"

While the old general hesitated, Camille replied, "Since you take that tone there can be but one answer. You are too great a credit to the French army for even an apparent slight to be put on you here. The rule, I think, is, that one of the privates shall hold the hat. — Hallo! Private Dard, come here — there — hold this hat."

"Yes, colonel. — Lord, here is my young mistress's husband!"

"Silence!"

And they began to draw, and, in the act of drawing, a change of manner was first visible in these gay and ardent spirits.

"It is not I," said one, throwing away his lot.

"Nor I."

"It is I," said Raynal; then with sudden gravity, "I am the lucky one."

And now that the honor and the danger no longer floated vaguely over four heads, but had fixed on one, a sudden silence and solemnity took the place of eager voices.

It was first broken by Private Dard saying, with foolish triumph, "And I held the hat for you, colonel."

"Ah, Raynal!" said General Raimbaut, sorrowfully, "it was not worth while to come from Egypt for this."

Raynal made no reply to this. He drew out his watch, and said calmly, he had no time to lose; he must inspect the detachments he was to command. "Besides," said he, "I have some domestic arrangements to make. Hitherto on these occasions I was a bachelor, now I am married." General Raimbaut could not help sighing. Raynal read this aright, and turned to him, "A droll marriage, my

old friend; I'll tell you all about it if ever I have the time. It began with a purchase, general, and ends with —with a bequest, which I might as well write now, and so have nothing to think of but duty afterwards. Where can I write?"

"Colonel Dujardin will lend you his tent, I am sure."

"Certainly."

"And, messieurs," said Raynal, "if I waste time you need not. You can pick me my men from your brigades. Give me a strong spice of old hands."

The colonels withdrew on this, and General Raimbaut walked sadly and thoughtfully towards the battery. Dujardin and Raynal were left alone.

"This postpones our affair, sir."

"Yes, Raynal."

"Have you writing materials in your tent?"

"Yes; on the table."

"You are quite sure the bastion is mined, comrade?"

This unexpected word and Raynal's gentle appeal touched Dujardin deeply. It was in a broken voice he replied that he was unfortunately too sure of it.

Raynal received this reply as a sentence of death, and without another word walked slowly into Dujardin's tent.

Dujardin's generosity was up in arms; he followed Raynal, and said eagerly, "Raynal, for Heaven's sake resign this command!"

"Allow me to write to my wife, colonel," was the cold reply.

Camille winced at this affront, and drew back a moment; but his nobler part prevailed. He seized Raynal by the wrist. "You shall not affront me, you cannot affront me. You go to certain death I tell you, if you attack that bastion."

"Don't be a fool, colonel," said Raynal: "somebody must lead the men."

"Yes; but not you. Who has so good a right to lead them as I, their colonel?"

"And be killed in my place, eh?"

"I know the ground better than you," said Camille. "Besides, who cares for me? I have no friends, no family. But you are married — and so many will mourn if you" —

Raynal interrupted him sternly. "You forget, sir, that Rose de Beaurepaire is my sister, when you tell me you have no tie to life." He added, with wonderful dignity and sobriety, "Allow me to write to my wife, sir; and, while I write, reflect that you can embitter an old comrade's last moments by persisting in your refusal to restore his sister the honor you have robbed her of."

And leaving the other staggered and confused by this sudden blow, he retired into Dujardin's tent, and finding writing materials on a little table that was there, sat down to pen a line to Josephine.

Camille knew to whom he was writing, and a jealous pang passed through him.

What he wrote ran thus, —

"A bastion is to be attacked at five. I command. Colonel Dujardin proposed we should draw lots, and I lost. The service is honorable, but the result may, I fear, give you some pain. My dear wife, it is our fate. I was not to have time to make you know, and perhaps love me. God bless you."

In writing these simple words, Raynal's hard face worked, and his mustache quivered, and once he had to clear his eye with his hand to form the letters. He, the man of iron.

He who stood there, leaning on his scabbard and watching the writer, saw this, and it stirred all that was great and good in that grand though passionate heart of his.

"Poor Raynal!" thought he, "you were never like that before on going into action. He is loath to die. Ay, and it is a coward's trick to let him die. I shall have her. but shall I have her esteem? What will the army say? What will my conscience say? Oh! I feel already it will gnaw my heart to death; the ghost of that brave fellow — once my dear friend, my rival now, by no fault of his — will rise between her and me, and reproach me with my bloody inheritance. The heart never deceives; I feel it now whispering in my ear: 'Skulking captain, white-livered soldier, that stand behind a parapet while a better man does your work! you assassinate the husband, but the rival conquers you.' There, he puts his hand to his eyes. What shall I do?"

"Colonel," said a low voice, and at the same time a hand was laid on his shoulder.

It was General Raimbaut. The general looked pale and distressed.

"Come apart, colonel, for Heaven's sake! One word, while he is writing. Ah! that was an unlucky idea of yours."

"Of mine, general?"

"'Twas you proposed to cast lots."

"Good God! so it was."

"I thought of course it was to be managed so that Raynal should not be the one. Between ourselves, what honorable excuse can we make?"

"None, general."

"The whole division will be disgraced, and forgive me if I say a portion of the discredit will fall on you."

"Help me to avert that shame then," cried Camille, eagerly.

"Ah! that I will: but how?"

"Take your pencil and write — 'I authorize Colonel Dujardin to save the honor of the colonels of the second division.'"

The general hesitated. He had never seen an order so worded. But at last he took out his pencil and wrote the required order, after his own fashion; i.e., in milk and water: —

On account of the singular ability and courage with which Colonel Dujardin has conducted the operations against the Bastion St. André, a discretionary power is given him at the moment of assault to carry into effect such measures, as, without interfering with the commander-in-chief's order, may sustain his own credit, and that of the other colonels of the second division.

RAIMBAUT, *General of Division.*

Camille put the paper into his bosom.

"Now, general, you may leave all to me. I swear to you, Raynal shall not die — shall not lead this assault."

"Your hand, colonel. You are an honor to the French armies. How will you do it?"

"Leave it to me, general, it shall be done."

"I feel it will, my noble fellow: but, alas! I fear not without risking some valuable life or other, most likely your own. Tell me!"

"General, I decline."

"You refuse me, sir?"

"Yes; this order gives me a discretionary power. I will hand back the order at your command; but modify it I will not. Come, sir, you veteran generals have been unjust to me, and listened to me too little all through this siege, but at last you have honored me. This order is the greatest honor that was ever done me since I wore a sword."

"My poor colonel!"

"Let me wear it intact, and carry it to my grave."

"Say no more! One word — Is there anything on earth I can do for you, my brave soldier?"

"Yes, general. Be so kind as to retire to your quarters; there are reasons why you ought not to be near this post in half an hour."

"I go. Is there *nothing* else?"

"Well, general, ask the good priest Ambrose, to pray for all those who shall die doing their duty to their country this afternoon."

They parted. General Raimbaut looked back more than once at the firm, intrepid figure that stood there unflinching, on the edge of the grave. But *he* never took his eye off Raynal. The next minute the sad letter was finished, and Raynal walked out of the tent, and confronted the man he had challenged to single combat.

I have mentioned elsewhere that Colonel Dujardin had eyes strangely compounded of battle and love, of the dove and the hawk. And these, softened by a noble act he meditated, now rested on Raynal with a strange expression of warmth and goodness. This strange gaze struck Raynal, so far at least as this; he saw it was no hostile eye. He was glad of that, for his own heart was calmed and softened by the solemn prospect before him.

"We, too, have a little account to settle before I order out the men," said he, calmly, "and I can't give you a long credit. I am pressed for time."

"Our quarrel is at an end. When duty sounds the recall, a soldier's heart leaves private feuds. See! I come to you without anger and ill-will. Just now my voice was loud, my manner, I dare say, offensive, and menacing even, and that always tempts a brave fellow like you to resist. But now, you see, I am harmless as a woman. We are alone. Humbug to the winds! I know that you are the only man in this army fit to command a division. I know that when you say the assault of that bastion is death, death it is. To the point then; now that my manner is no longer irritating, now that I

am going to die, Camille Dujardin, my old comrade, have you the heart to refuse me? am I to die unhappy?"

"No; no: I will do whatever you like."

"You will marry that poor girl, then?"

"Yes."

"Aha! did not I always say he was a good fellow? Clench the nail; give me your honor."

"I give you my honor to marry her, if I live."

"You take a load off me; may Heaven reward you. In one hour those poor women, whose support I had promised to be, will lose their protector; but I give them another in you. We shall not leave that family in tears, Rose in shame, and your child without a name."

Dujardin stared at the speaker. What new and devilish deception was this?

"My child!" he faltered. "What child?"

"Ah," said Raynal, "what a fool I was! That is the first thing I ought to have told you. Poor little fellow! I surprised him in his cradle; his mother and Josephine were rocking him, and singing over him. Oh! it was a scene, I can tell you. My poor wife had been ill for some time, and was so weakened by it, that I frightened her into a fit, stealing a march on her that way. She fainted away. Perhaps it is as well she did; for I — I did not know what to think; it looked ugly; but while she lay at our feet insensible, I forced the truth from Rose; she owned the boy was hers."

While Raynal told him this strange story, Camille turned hot and cold. First came a thrill of glowing joy; he had some clew to all this: he was a father; that child was Josephine's and his; the next moment he froze within. So Josephine had not only gulled her husband, but him, too; she had refused him the sad consolation of knowing he had a child. Cruelty, calculation, and baseness unexampled! Here was a creature who could

sacrifice anything and anybody to her comfort, to the peace and sordid smoothness of her domestic life. She stood between two men — a thing. Between two truths — a double lie.

His heart, in one moment, turned against her like a stone. A musket-bullet through the body does not turn life to death quicker than Raynal turned his rival's love to despair and scorn: that love which neither wounds, absence, prison, nor even her want of constancy had prevailed to shake.

"Out of my bosom!" he cried — "out of it, in this world and the next!"

He forgot, in his lofty rage, who stood beside him.

"What? — what?" cried Raynal.

"No matter," said Camille; "only I esteem *you*, Raynal. You are truth; you are a man, and deserve a better lot."

"Don't say that," replied Raynal, quite misunderstanding him. "It is a soldier's end: I never desired nor hoped a better: only, of course, I feel sad. You are a happy fellow, to have a child and to live to see it, and her you love."

"Oh, yes, I am very happy," replied the poor fellow, his lip quivering.

"Watch over all those poor women, comrade, and sometimes speak to them of me. It is foolish, but we like to be remembered."

"Yes! but do not let us speak of that. Raynal, you and I were lieutenants together; do you remember saving my life in the Arno?"

"Yes."

"Then promise me, if you should live, to remember not our quarrel of to-day, nor anything; but only those early days, *and this afternoon.*"

"I do."

"Your hand, comrade."

"There, comrade, there."

They wrung one another's hands, and turned away and hid their faces from each other, for their eyes were moist.

"This won't do, comrade, I must go. I shall attack from your position. So I shall go down the line, and bring the men up. Meantime, pick me your detachment. Give me a good spice of veterans. I shall get one word with you before we go out. God bless you!"

"God bless you, Raynal!"

The moment Raynal was gone, Camille beckoned a lieutenant to him, and ordered half the brigade to form in a strong column on both sides Death's Alley.

His eye fell upon private Dard, as luck would have it. "Come here," said he. Dard came and saluted.

"Have you anybody at Beaurepaire that would be sorry if you were killed?"

"Yes, colonel! Jacintha, that used to make your broth, colonel."

"Take this line to Colonel Raynal. You will find him with the 12th brigade."

He wrote a few lines in pencil, folded them, and Dard went off with them, little dreaming that the colonel of his brigade was taking the trouble to save his life, because he came from Beaurepaire. Colonel Dujardin then went into his tent, and closed the aperture, and took the good book the priest had given him, and prayed humbly, and forgave all the world.

Then he sat down, his head in his hands, and thought of his child, and how hard it was he must die and never see him. Then he lighted a candle, and sealed up his orders of valor, and wrote a line, begging that they might be sent to his sister. He also sealed up his purse, and left a memorandum that the contents should

be given to disabled soldiers of his brigade upon their being invalided.

Then he took out Josephine's letter. "Poor coward," he said, "let me not be unkind. See, I burn your letter, lest it should be found, and disturb the peace you prize so highly. I, too, shall soon be at peace." He lighted the letter, and dropped it on the ground: it burned slowly away. He eyed it, despairingly. "Ay," said he, "you perish, last record of an unhappy love: and even so pass away my life; my hopes of glory, and my dreams of love; it all ends to-day: at nine and twenty."

He put his white handkerchief to his eyes. Josephine had given it him. He cried a little.

When he had done crying, he put his white handkerchief in his bosom, and the whole man was transformed beyond language to express. Powder does not change more when it catches fire. He rose that moment and went like a flash of lightning out of the tent. The next, he came down between the lines of the strong column that stood awaiting orders in Death's Alley.

"Attention!" cried the sergeants; "the colonel!"

There was a dead silence, for the bare sight of that erect and inspired figure made the men's bosoms thrill with the certainty of great deeds to come: the light of battle was in his eye. No longer the moody colonel, but a thunderbolt of war, red-hot, and waiting to be launched.

"Officers, sergeants, soldiers, a word with you!"

La Croix. Attention!

"Do you know what passed here five minutes ago?"

"The attack of the bastion was settled!" cried a captain.

"It was; and who was to lead the assault? do you know that?"

"No."

"A colonel FROM EGYPT."

At that there was a groan from the men.

"With detachments from the other brigades."

"AH!" an angry roar.

Colonel Dujardin walked quickly down between the two lines, looking with his fiery eye into the men's eyes on his right. Then he came back on the other side, and, as he went, he lighted those men's eyes with his own. It was a torch passing along a line of ready gas-lights.

"The work to us!" he cried in a voice like a clarion (it fired the hearts as his eye had fired the eyes) — "The triumph to strangers! Our fatigues and our losses have not gained the brigade the honor of going out at those fellows that have killed so many of our comrades."

A fierce groan broke from the men.

"What! shall the colors of another brigade and not ours fly from that bastion this afternoon?"

"No! no!" in a roar like thunder.

"Ah! you are of my mind. Attention! the attack is fixed for five o'clock. Suppose you and I were to carry the bastion ten minutes before the colonel from Egypt can bring his men upon the ground."

At this there was a fierce burst of joy and laughter; the strange laughter of veterans and born invincibles. Then a yell of exulting assent, accompanied by the thunder of impatient drums, and the rattle of fixing bayonets.

The colonel told off a party to the battery.

"Level the guns at the top tier. Fire at my signal, and keep firing over our heads, till you see our colors on the place."

He then darted to the head of the column, which instantly formed behind him in the centre of Death's Alley.

"The colors! No hand but mine shall hold them to-day."

They were instantly brought him: his left hand shook them free in the afternoon sun.

A deep murmur of joy rolled out from the old hands at the now unwonted sight. Out flashed the colonel's sword like steel lightning. He pointed to the battery.

Bang! bang! bang! bang! went his cannon, and the smoke rolled over the trenches. At the same moment up went the colors waving, and the colonel's clarion voice pealed high above all: —

"Twenty-fourth brigade — FORWARD!"

They went so swiftly out of the trenches that they were not seen through their own smoke until they had run some sixty yards. As soon as they were seen, coming on like devils through their own smoke, two thousand muskets were levelled at them from the Prussian line. It was not a rattle of small arms — it was a crash, and the men fell fast: but in a moment they were seen to spread out like a fan, and to offer less mark, and when the fan closed again, it half encircled the bastion. It was a French attack: part swarmed at it in front like bees, part swept round the glacis and flanked it. They were seen to fall in numbers, shot down from the embrasures. But the living took the place of the dead: and the fight ranged evenly there. Where are the colors? Towards the rear there. The colonel and a hundred men are fighting hand to hand with the Prussians, who have charged out at the back doors of the bastion. Success there, and the bastion must fall — both sides know this.

The colors disappeared. There was a groan from the French lines. The colors reappeared, and close under the bastion.

And now in front the attack was so hot, that often the Prussian gunners were seen to jump down, driven from their posts; and the next moment a fierce hurrah from the rear told that the French had won some great advantage

there. The fire slackening told a similar tale and presently down came the Prussian flag-staff. That might be an accident. A few moments of thirsting expectation, and up went the colors of the 24th brigade upon the Bastion St. André.

The French army raised a shout that rent the sky, and their cannon began to play on the Prussian lines and between the bastion and the nearest fort, to prevent a recapture.

Sudden there shot from the bastion a cubic acre of fire: it carried up a heavy mountain of red and black smoke that looked solid as marble. There was a heavy, sullen, tremendous explosion that snuffed out the sound of the cannon, and paralyzed the French and Prussian gunners' hands, and checked the very beating of their hearts. Thirty thousand pounds of gunpowder were in that awful explosion. War itself held its breath, and both armies, like peaceable spectators, gazed wonder-struck, terror-struck. Great hell seemed to burst through the earth's crust, and to be rushing at heaven. Huge stones, cannons, corpses, and limbs of soldiers, were seen driven or falling through the smoke. Some of these last came quite clear of the ruins, ay, into the French and Prussian lines, that even the veterans put their hands to their eyes. Raynal felt something patter on him from the sky — it was blood — a comrade's perhaps.

The smoke cleared. Where, a moment before, the great bastion stood and fought, was a monstrous pile of blackened, bloody stones and timbers, with dismounted cannon sticking up here and there.

And, rent and crushed to atoms beneath the smoking mass, lay the relics of the gallant brigade, and their victorious colors.

CHAPTER XXII.

A FEW wounded soldiers of the brigade lay still till dusk. Then they crept back to the trenches. These had all been struck down or disabled short of the bastion. Of those that had taken the place no one came home.

Raynal, after the first stupefaction, pressed hard and even angrily for an immediate assault on the whole Prussian line. Not they. It was on paper that the assault should be at daybreak to-morrow. Such leaders as they were cannot *improvise.*

Rage and grief in his heart, Raynal waited chafing in the trenches till five minutes past midnight. He then became commander of the brigade, gave his orders, and took thirty men out to creep up to the wreck of the bastion, and find the late colonel's body.

Going for so pious a purpose, he was rewarded by an important discovery. The whole Prussian lines had been abandoned since sunset, and, mounting cautiously on the ramparts, Raynal saw the town too was evacuated, and lights and other indications on a rising ground behind it convinced him that the Prussians were in full retreat, probably to effect that junction with other forces which the assault he had recommended would have rendered impossible.

They now lighted lanterns, and searched all over and round the bastion for the poor colonel. In the rear of the bastion they found many French soldiers, most of whom had died by the bayonet. The Prussian dead had all been carried off.

Here they found the talkative Sergeant La Croix. The poor fellow was silent enough now. A terrible sabre-cut on the skull. The colonel was not there. Raynal groaned, and led the way on to the bastion. The ruins still smoked. Seven or eight bodies were discovered by an arm or a foot protruding through the masses of masonry. Of these some were Prussians; a proof that some devoted hand had fired the train, and destroyed both friend and foe.

They found the tube of Long Tom sticking up, just as he had shown over the battlements that glorious day, with this exception, that a great piece was knocked off his lip, and the slice ended in a long, broad crack.

The soldiers looked at this. "That is our bullet's work," said they. Then one old veteran touched his cap, and told Raynal gravely, he knew where their beloved colonel was. "Dig here, to the bottom," said he. "*He lies beneath his work.*"

Improbable and superstitious as this was, the hearts of the soldiers assented to it.

Presently there was a joyful cry outside the bastion. A rush was made thither. But it proved to be only Dard, who had discovered that Sergeant La Croix's heart still beat. They took him up carefully, and carried him gently into camp. To Dard's delight the surgeon pronounced him curable. For all that, he was three days insensible, and after that unfit for duty. So they sent him home invalided, with a hundred francs out of the poor colonel's purse.

Raynal reported the evacuation of the place, and that Colonel Dujardin was buried under the bastion, and soon after rode out of the camp.

The words Camille had scratched with a pencil, and sent him from the edge of the grave, were few but striking.

"A dead man takes you once more by the hand. My last thought, thank God, is France. For her sake and mine, Raynal, GO FOR GENERAL BONAPARTE. Tell him, from a dying soldier, the Rhine is a river to these generals, but to him a field of glory. He will lay out our lives, not waste them."

There was nothing to hinder Raynal from carrying out this sacred request: for the 24th brigade had ceased to exist: already thinned by hard service, it was reduced to a file or two by the fatal bastion. It was incorporated with the 12th; and Raynal rode heavy at heart to Paris, with a black scarf across his breast.

CHAPTER XXIII.

You see now into what a fatal entanglement two high-minded young ladies were led, step by step, through yielding to the natural foible of their sex — the desire to hide everything painful from those they love, even at the expense of truth.

A nice mess they made of it with their amiable dishonesty. And pray take notice that after the first White Lie or two, circumstances overpowered them, and drove them on against their will. It was no small part of all their misery that they longed to get back to truth and could not.

We shall see presently how far they succeeded in that pious object, for the sake of which they first entered on concealments. But first a word is due about one of the victims of their amiable, self-sacrificing lubricity. Edouard Riviere fell in one night, from happiness and confidence, such as till that night he had never enjoyed, to deep and hopeless misery.

He lost that which, to every heart capable of really loving, is the greatest earthly blessing, the woman he adored. But worse than that, he lost those prime treasures of the masculine soul, belief in human goodness, and in female purity. To him no more could there be in nature a candid eye, a virtuous ready-mantling cheek: for frailty and treachery had put on these signs of virtue and nobility. Henceforth, let him live a hundred years, whom could he trust or believe in?

Here was a creature whose virtues seemed to make frailty impossible: treachery, doubly impossible: a creat-

ure whose very faults — for faults she had — had seemed as opposite to treachery as her very virtues were. Yet she was all frailty and falsehood.

He passed in that one night of anguish from youth to age. He went about his business like a leaden thing. His food turned tasteless. His life seemed ended. Nothing appeared what it had been. The very landscape seemed cut in stone, and he a stone in the middle of it, and his heart a stone in him. At times, across that heavy heart came gushes of furious rage and bitter mortification; his heart was broken, and his faith was gone, for his vanity had been stabbed as fiercely as his love. "Georges Dandin!" he would cry, "curse her! curse her!" But love and misery overpowered these heats, and froze him to stone again.

The poor boy pined and pined. His clothes hung loose about him; his face was so drawn with suffering, you would not have known him. He hated company. The things he was expected to talk about! — he with his crushed heart. He could not. He would not. He shunned all the world; he went alone like a wounded deer. The good doctor, on his return from Paris, called on him to see if he was ill: since he had not come for days to the château. He saw the doctor coming and bade the servant say he was not in the village.

He drew down the blind, that he might never see the château again. He drew it up again: he could not exist without seeing it. "She will be miserable, too," he cried, gnashing his teeth. "She will see whether she has chosen well." At other times, all his courage, and his hatred, and his wounded vanity, were drowned in his love and its despair, and then he bowed his head, and sobbed and cried as if his heart would burst. One morning he was so sobbing with his head on the table, when his landlady tapped at his door. He started up, and turned his head away from the door.

"A young woman from Beaurepaire, monsieur."

"From Beaurepaire?" his heart gave a furious leap. "Show her in."

He wiped his eyes and seated himself at a table, and, all in a flutter, pretended to be the state's.

It was not Jacintha, as he expected, but the other servant. She made a low reverence, cast a look of admiration on him, and gave him a letter. His eye darted on it: his hand trembled as he took it. He turned away again to open it. He forced himself to say, in a tolerably calm voice, "I will send an answer."

The letter was apparently from the baroness de Beaurepaire; a mere line inviting him to pay her a visit. It was written in a tremulous hand. Edouard examined the writing, and saw directly it was written by Rose.

Being now, naturally enough, full of suspicion, he set this down as an attempt to disguise her hand. "So," said he, to himself, "this is the game. The old woman is to be drawn into it, too. She is to help to make Georges Dandin of me. I will go. I will baffle them all. I will expose this nest of depravity, all ceremony on the surface, and voluptuousness and treachery below. O God! who could believe that creature never loved me! They shall none of them see my weakness. Their benefactor shall be still their superior. They shall see me cold as ice, and bitter as gall."

But to follow him farther just now, would be to run too far in advance of the main story. I must, therefore, return to Beaurepaire, and show, amongst other things, how this very letter came to be written.

When Josephine and Rose awoke from that startled slumber that followed the exhaustion of that troubled night, Rose was the more wretched of the two. She had not only dishonored herself, but stabbed the man she loved.

Josephine, on the other hand, was exhausted, but calm. The fearful escape she had had softened down by contrast her more distant terrors.

She began to shut her eyes again, and let herself drift. Above all, the doctor's promise comforted her: that she should go to Paris with him, and have her boy.

This deceitful calm of the heart lasted three days.

Carefully encouraged by Rose, it was destroyed by Jacintha.

Jacintha, conscious that she had betrayed her trust, was almost heart-broken. She was ashamed to appear before her young mistress, and, coward-like, wanted to avoid knowing even how much harm she had done.

She pretended toothache, bound up her face, and never stirred from the kitchen. But she was not to escape: the other servant came down with a message: "Madame Raynal wanted to see her directly."

She came quaking, and found Josephine all alone.

Josephine rose to meet her, and casting a furtive glance round the room first, threw her arms round Jacintha's neck, and embraced her with many tears.

"Was ever fidelity like yours? how *could* you do it, Jacintha? and how can I ever repay it? But, no; it is too base of me to accept such a sacrifice from any woman."

Jacintha was so confounded she did not know what to say. But it was a mystification that could not endure long between two women, who were both deceived by a third. Between them they soon discovered that it must have been Rose who had sacrificed herself.

"And Edouard has never been here since," said Josephine.

"And never will, madame."

"Yes, he shall! there must be some limit even to my feebleness, and my sister's devotion. You shall take a line to him from me. I will write it this moment."

The letter was written. But it was never sent. Rose found Josephine and Jacintha together; saw a letter was being written, asked to see it; on Josephine's hesitating, snatched it out of her hand, read it, tore it to pieces, and told Jacintha to leave the room. She hated the sight of poor Jacintha, who had slept at the very moment when all depended on her watchfulness.

"So you were going to send to *him*, unknown to me."

"Forgive me, Rose." Rose burst out crying.

"O Josephine! is it come to this? Would you deceive *me?*"

"You have deceived *me!* Yes! it has come to that. I know all. I will not consent to destroy *all* I love."

She then begged hard for leave to send the letter.

Rose gave an impetuous refusal. "What could you say to him? foolish thing, don't you know him, and his vanity? When you had exposed yourself to him, and showed him I had insulted him for you, do you think he would forgive me? No! this is to make light of my love—to make me waste the sacrifice I have made. I feel that sacrifice as much as you do, more perhaps, and I would rather die in a convent than waste that night of shame and agony. Come, promise me, no more attempts of that kind, or we are sisters no more, friends no more, one heart and one blood no more."

The weaker nature, weakened still more by ill-health and grief, was terrified into submission, or rather temporized. "Kiss me then," said Josephine, "and love me to the end. Ah, if I was only in my grave!"

Rose kissed her with many sighs, but Josephine smiled. Rose eyed her with suspicion. That deep smile; what did it mean? She had formed some resolution. "She is going to deceive me somehow," thought Rose.

From that day she watched Josephine like a spy. Confidence was gone between them. Suspicion took its place.

Rose was right in her misgivings. The moment Josephine saw that Edouard's happiness and Rose's were to be sacrificed for her whom nothing could make happy, the poor thing said to herself, "I CAN DIE."

And that was the happy thought that made her smile.

The doctor gave her laudanum: he found she could not sleep: and he thought it all-important that she should sleep.

Josephine, instead of taking these small doses, saved them all up, secreted them in a phial, and so, from the sleep of a dozen nights, collected the sleep of death: and now she was tranquil. This young creature that could not bear to give pain to any one else, prepared her own death with a calm resolution the heroes of our sex have not often equalled. It was so little a thing to her to strike Josephine. Death would save her honor, would spare her the frightful alternative of deceiving her husband, or of telling him she was another's. "Poor Raynal," said she to herself, "it is so cruel to tie him to a woman who can never be to him what he deserves. Rose would then prove her innocence to Edouard. A few tears for a weak, loving soul, and they would all be happy and forget her."

One day the baroness, finding herself alone with Rose and Dr. Aubertin, asked the latter what he thought of Josephine's state.

"Oh, she was better: had slept last night without her usual narcotic."

The baroness laid down her knitting and said, with much meaning, "And I tell you, you will never cure her body till you can cure her mind. My poor child has some secret sorrow."

"Sorrow!" said Aubertin, stoutly concealing the uneasiness these words created, "what sorrow?"

"Oh, she has some deep sorrow. And so have you, Rose."

"Me, mamma! what *do* you mean?"

The baroness's pale cheek flushed a little. "I mean," said she, "that my patience is worn out at last; I cannot live surrounded by secrets. Raynal's gloomy looks when he left us, after staying but one hour; Josephine ill from that day, and bursting into tears at every word; yourself pale and changed, hiding an unaccountable sadness under forced smiles — Now, don't interrupt me. Edouard, who was almost like a son, gone off, without a word, and never comes near us now."

"Really you are ingenious in tormenting yourself. Josephine is ill! Well, is it so very strange? Have you never been ill? Rose is pale! you *are* pale, my dear; but she has nursed her sister for a month; is it a wonder she has lost color? Edouard is gone a journey, to inherit his uncle's property: a million francs. But don't you go and fall ill, like Josephine; turn pale, like Rose; and make journeys in the region of fancy, after Edouard Riviere, who is tramping along on the vulgar high road."

This tirade came from Aubertin, and very clever he thought himself. But he had to do with a shrewd old lady, whose suspicions had long smouldered; and now burst out. She said quietly, "Oh, then Edouard is not in this part of the world. That alters the case: where *is* he?"

"In Normandy, probably," said Rose, blushing.

The baroness looked inquiringly towards Aubertin. He put on an innocent face and said nothing.

"Very good," said the baroness. "It's plain I am to learn nothing from you two. But I know somebody who will be more communicative. Yes: this uncomfortable smiling, and unreasonable crying, and interminable whis-

pering; these appearances of the absent, and disappearances of the present; I shall know this very day what they all mean."

"Really, I do not understand you."

"Oh, never mind; I am an old woman, and I am in my dotage. For all that, perhaps you will allow me two words alone with my daughter."

"I retire, madame," and he disappeared with a bow to her, and an anxious look at Rose. She did not need this; she clenched her teeth, and braced herself up to stand a severe interrogatory.

Mother and daughter looked at one another, as if to measure forces, and then, instead of questioning her as she had intended, the baroness sank back in her chair and wept aloud. Rose was all unprepared for this. She almost screamed in a voice of agony, "O mamma! mamma! O God! kill me where I stand for making my mother weep!"

"My girl," said the baroness in a broken voice, and with the most touching dignity, "may you never know what a mother feels who finds herself shut out from her daughters' hearts. Sometimes I think it is my fault; I was born in a severer age. A mother nowadays seems to be a sort of elder sister. In my day she was something more. Yet I loved my mother as well, or better than I did my sisters. But it is not so with those I have borne in my bosom, and nursed upon my knee."

At this Rose flung herself, sobbing and screaming, at her mother's knees. The baroness was alarmed. "Come, dearest, don't cry like that. It is not too late to take your poor old mother into your confidence. What is this mystery? and why this sorrow? How comes it I intercept at every instant glances that were not intended for me? Why is the very air loaded with signals and secrecy? (Rose replied only by sobs.) Is some deceit

going on? (Rose sobbed.) Am I to have no reply but these sullen sobs? will you really tell me nothing?"

"I've nothing to tell," sobbed Rose.

"Well, then, will you do something for me?"

Such a proposal was not only a relief, but a delight to the deceiving but loving daughter. She started up crying, "Oh, yes, mamma; anything, everything. Oh, thank you!" In the ardor of her gratitude, she wanted to kiss her mother; but the baroness declined the embrace politely, and said, coldly and bitterly, "I shall not ask much; I should not venture now to draw largely on your affection; it's only to write a few lines for me."

Rose got paper and ink with great alacrity, and sat down all beaming, pen in hand.

The baroness dictated the letter slowly, with an eye gimleting her daughter all the time.

"*Dear — Monsieur — Riviere.*"

The pen fell from Rose's hand, and she turned red and then pale.

"What! write to him?"

"Not in your own name; in mine. But perhaps you prefer to give me the trouble."

"Cruel! cruel!" sighed Rose, and wrote the words as requested.

The baroness dictated again, —

"*Oblige me by coming here at your very earliest convenience.*"

"But, mamma, if he is in Normandy," remonstrated Rose, fighting every inch of the ground.

"Never you mind where he is," said the baroness. "Write as I request."

"Yes, mamma," said Rose with sudden alacrity; for she had recovered her ready wit, and was prepared to write anything, being now fully resolved the letter should never go.

"Now sign my name." Rose complied. "There; now fold it, and address it to his lodgings." Rose did so; and, rising with a cheerful air, said she would send Jacintha with it directly.

She was half across the room when her mother called her quietly back.

"No, mademoiselle," said she sternly. "You will give me the letter. I can trust neither the friend of twenty years, nor the servant that stayed by me in adversity, nor the daughter I suffered for and nursed. And why don't I trust you? Because *you have told me a lie.*"

At this word, which in its coarsest form she had never heard from those high-born lips till then, Rose cowered like a hare.

"Ay, *a lie,*" said the baroness. "I saw Edouard Riviere in the park but yesterday. I saw him. My old eyes are feeble, but they are not deceitful. I saw him. Send my breakfast to my own room. I come of an ancient race: I could not sit with liars; I should forget courtesy; you would see in my face how thoroughly I scorn you all." And she went haughtily out with the letter in her hand.

Rose, for the first time, was prostrated. Vain had been all this deceit; her mother was not happy; was not blinded. Edouard might come and tell her his story. Then no power could keep Josephine silent. The plot was thickening; the fatal net was drawing closer and closer.

She sank with a groan into a chair, and body and spirit alike succumbed. But that was only for a little while. To this prostration succeeded a feverish excitement. She could not, would not, look Edouard in the face. She would implore Josephine to be silent; and she herself would fly from the château. But, if Joseph-

ine would not be silent? Why, then she would go herself to Edouard, and throw herself upon his honor, and tell him the truth. With this, she ran wildly up the stairs, and burst into Josephine's room so suddenly, that she caught her, pale as death, on her knees, with a letter in one hand and a phial of laudanum in the other.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Josephine conveyed the phial into her bosom with wonderful rapidity and dexterity, and rose to her feet. But Rose just saw her conceal something, and resolved to find out quietly what it was. So she said nothing about it, but asked Josephine what on earth she was doing.

"I was praying."

"And what is that letter?"

"A letter I have just received from Colonel Raynal."

Rose took the letter and read it. Raynal had written from Paris. He was coming to Beaurepaire to stay a month, and was to arrive that very day.

Then Rose forgot all about herself, and even what she had come for. She clung about her sister's neck, and implored her, for her sake, to try and love Raynal.

Josephine shuddered, and clung weeping to her sister in turn. For in Rose's arms she realized more powerfully what that sister would suffer if she were to die. Now, while they clung together, Rose felt something hard, and contrived just to feel it with her cheek. It was the phial.

A chill suspicion crossed the poor girl. The attitude in which she had found Josephine; the letter, the look of despair, and now this little bottle, which she had hidden. *Why hide it?* She resolved not to let Josephine out of her sight; at all events, until she had seen this little bottle, and got it away from her.

She helped her to dress, and breakfasted with her in the tapestried room, and dissembled, and put on gayety, and made light of everything but Josephine's health.

Her efforts were not quite in vain. Josephine became more composed; and Rose even drew from her a half promise that she would give Raynal and time a fair trial.

And now Rose was relieved of her immediate apprehensions for Josephine, but the danger of another kind, from Edouard, remained. So she ran into her bedroom for her bonnet and shawl, determined to take the strong measure of visiting Edouard at once, or intercepting him. While she was making her little toilet, she heard her mother's voice in the room. This was unlucky; she must pass through that room to go out. She sat down and fretted at this delay. And then, as the baroness appeared to be very animated, Rose went to the keyhole, and listened. Their mother was telling Josephine how she had questioned Rose, and how Rose had told her an untruth, and how she had made that young lady write to Edouard, etc.; in short, the very thing Rose wanted to conceal from Josephine.

Rose lost all patience, and determined to fly through the room and out before anybody could stop her. She heard Jacintha come in with some message, and thought that would be a good opportunity to slip out unmolested. So she opened the door softly. Jacintha, it seemed, had been volunteering some remark that was not well received, for the baroness was saying, sharply, "Your opinion is not asked. Go down directly, and bring him up here, to this room." Jacintha cast a look of dismay at Rose, and vanished.

Rose gathered from that look, as much as from the words, who the visitor was. She made a dart after Jacintha. But the room was a long one, and the baroness intercepted her: "No," said she, gravely, "I cannot spare you."

Rose stood pale and panting, but almost defiant. "Mamma," said she, "if it is Monsieur Riviere, I *must*

ask your leave to retire. And you have neither love nor pity, nor respect for me, if you detain me."

"Mademoiselle!" was the stern reply, "I *forbid* you to move. Be good enough to sit there;" with which the baroness pointed imperiously to a sofa at the other side of the room. "Josephine, go to your room." Josephine retired, casting more than one anxious glance over her shoulder.

Rose looked this way and that in despair and terror; but ended by sinking, more dead than alive, into the seat indicated; and even as she drooped, pale and trembling, on that sofa, Edouard Riviere, worn and agitated, entered the room, and bowed low to them all, without a word.

The baroness looked at him, and then at her daughter, as much as to say, now I have got you; deceive me now if you can. "Rose, my dear," said this terrible old woman, affecting honeyed accents, "don't you see Monsieur Riviere?"

The poor girl at this challenge rose with difficulty, and courtesied humbly to Edouard.

He bowed to her, and stealing a rapid glance saw her pallor and distress; and that showed him she was not so hardened as he had thought.

"You have not come to see us lately," said the baroness, quietly, "yet you have been in the neighborhood."

These words puzzled Edouard. Was the old lady all in the dark, then? As a public man he had already learned to be on his guard; so he stammered out, "That he had been much occupied with public duties."

Madame de Beaurepaire despised this threadbare excuse too much to notice it at all. She went on as if he had said nothing. "Intimate as you were with us, you must have some reason for deserting us so suddenly."

"I have," said Edouard, gravely.

"What is it?"

"Excuse me," said Edouard, sullenly.

"No, monsieur, I cannot. This neglect, succeeding to a somewhat ardent pursuit of my daughter, is almost an affront. You shall, of course, withdraw yourself altogether, if you choose. But not without an explanation. This much is due to me; and, if you are a gentleman, you will not withhold it from me."

"If he is a gentleman!" cried Rose; "O mamma, do not you affront a gentleman, who never, never gave you nor me any ground of offence. Why affront the friends and benefactors we have lost by our own fault?"

"Oh, then, it is all your fault," said the baroness. "I feared as much."

"All my fault, all," said Rose; then putting her pretty palms together, and casting a look of abject supplication on Edouard, she murmured, "my temper!"

"Do not you put words into his mouth," said the shrewd old lady. "Come, Monsieur Riviere, be a man, and tell me the truth. What has she said to you? What has she done?"

By this time the abject state of terror the high-spirited Rose was in, and her piteous glances, had so disarmed Edouard, that he had not the heart to expose her to her mother.

"Madame," said he, stiffly, taking Rose's hint, "my temper and mademoiselle's could not accord."

"Why, her temper is charming: it is joyous, equal, and gentle."

"You misunderstand me, madame; I do not reproach Mademoiselle Rose. It is I who am to blame."

"For what?" inquired the baroness dryly.

"For not being able to make her love me."

"Oh! that is it! She did not love you?"

"Ask herself, madame," said Edouard, bitterly.

"Rose," said the baroness, her eye now beginning to

twinkle, "were you really guilty of such a want of discrimination? Didn't you love monsieur?"

Rose flung her arms round her mother's neck, and said, "No, mamma, I did not love Monsieur Edouard," in an exquisite tone of love, that to a female ear conveyed the exact opposite of the words.

But Edouard had not that nice discriminating ear. He sighed deeply, and the baroness smiled. "You tell me that?" said she, "and you are crying!"

"She is crying, madame?" said Edouard, inquiringly, and taking a step towards them.

"Why, you see she is, you foolish boy. Come, I must put an end to this;" and she rose coolly from her seat, and begging Edouard to forgive her for leaving him a moment with his deadly enemy, went off with knowing little nods into Josephine's room; only, before she entered it, she turned, and with a maternal smile discharged this word at the pair.

"Babies!"

But between the alienated lovers was a long distressing silence. Neither knew what to say; and their situation was intolerable. At last Rose ventured in a timorous voice to say, "I thank you for your generosity. But I knew that you would not betray me."

"Your secret is safe for me," sighed Edouard. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Rose shook her head sadly.

Edouard moved to the door.

Rose bowed her head with a despairing moan. It took him by the heart and held him. He hesitated, then came towards her.

"I see you are sorry for what you have done to me who loved you so; and you loved me. Oh! yes, do not deny it, Rose; there was a time you loved me. And that makes it worse: to have given me such sweet hopes, only

to crush both them and me. And is not this cruel of you to weep so and let me see your penitence — when it is too late ? "

" Alas ! how can I help my regrets ? I have insulted so good a friend."

There was a sad silence. Then as he looked at her, her looks belied the charge her own lips had made against herself.

A light seemed to burst on Edouard from that high-minded, sorrow-stricken face.

" Tell me it is false ! " he cried.

She hid her face in her hands — woman's instinct to avoid being read.

" Tell me you were misled then, fascinated, perverted, but that your heart returned to me. Clear yourself of deliberate deceit, and I will believe and thank you on my knees."

" Heaven have pity on us both ! " cried poor Rose.

" On us ! Thank you for saying on us. See now, you have not gained happiness by destroying mine. One word — do you love that man ? — that Dujardin ? "

" You know I do not."

" I am glad of that; since his life is forfeited; if he escapes my friend Raynal, he shall not escape me."

Rose uttered a cry of terror. " Hush ! not so loud. The life of Camille ! Oh ! if he were to die, what would become of — oh, pray do not speak so loud."

" Own then that you *do* love him," yelled Edouard; " give me truth, if you have no love to give. Own that you love him, and he shall be safe. It is myself I will kill, for being such a slave as to love you still."

Rose's fortitude gave way.

" I cannot bear it," she cried despairingly; " it is beyond my strength; Edouard, swear to me you will keep what I tell you secret as the grave ! "

"Ah!" cried Edouard, all radiant with hope, "I swear."

"Then you are under a delirium. I have deceived, but never wronged you; that unhappy child is not — Hush! *Here she comes.*"

The baroness came smiling out, and Josephine's wan, anxious face was seen behind her.

"Well," said the baroness, "is the war at an end? What, are we still silent? Let me try then what I can do. Edouard, lend me your hand."

While Edouard hesitated, Josephine clasped her hands and mutely supplicated him to consent. Her sad face, and the thought of how often she had stood his friend, shook his resolution. He held out his hand, but slowly and reluctantly.

"There is my hand," he groaned.

"And here is mine, mamma," said Rose, smiling to please her mother.

Oh! the mixture of feeling, when her soft warm palm pressed his. How the delicious sense baffled and mystified the cold judgment.

Josephine raised her eyes thankfully to heaven.

While the young lovers yet thrilled at each other's touch, yet could not look one another in the face, a clatter of horses' feet was heard.

"That is Colonel Raynal," said Josephine, with unnatural calmness. "I expected him to-day."

The baroness was at the side window in a moment.

"It is he! — it is he!"

She hurried down to embrace her son.

Josephine went without a word to her own room. Rose followed her the next minute. But in that one minute she worked magic.

She glided up to Edouard, and looked him full in the face: not the sad, depressed, guilty-looking humble Rose

of a moment before, but the old high-spirited, and some what imperious girl.

"You have shown yourself noble this day. I am going to trust you as only the noble are trusted. Stay in the house till I can speak to you."

She was gone, and something leaped within Edouard's bosom, and a flood of light seemed to burst in on him. Yet he saw no object clearly: but he saw light.

Rose ran into Josephine's room, and once more surprised her on her knees, and in the very act of hiding something in her bosom.

"What are you doing, Josephine, on your knees?" said she, sternly.

"I have a great trial to go through," was the hesitating answer.

Rose said nothing. She turned paler. She is deceiving me, thought she, and she sat down full of bitterness and terror, and, affecting not to watch Josephine, watched her.

"Go and tell them I am coming, Rose."

"No, Josephine, I will not leave you till this terrible meeting is over. We will encounter him hand in hand, as we used to go when our hearts were one, and we deceived others, but never each other."

At this tender reproach Josephine fell upon her neck and wept.

"I will not deceive you," she said. "I am worse than the poor doctor thinks me. My life is but a little candle that a breath may put out any day."

Rose said nothing, but trembled and watched her keenly.

"My little Henri," said Josephine imploringly, "what would you do with him — if anything should happen to me?"

"What would I do with him? He is mine. I should

be his mother. Oh! what words are these: my heart! my heart!"

"No, dearest; some day you will be married, and owe all the mother to your children; and Henri is not ours only: he belongs to some one I have seemed unkind to. Perhaps he thinks me heartless. For I am a foolish woman; I don't know how to be virtuous, yet show a man my heart. But *then* he will understand me and forgive me. Rose, love, you will write to him. He will come to you. You will go together to the place where I shall be sleeping. You will show him my heart. You will tell him all my long love that lasted to the end. *You* need not blush to tell him all. I have no right. Then you will give him his poor Josephine's boy, and you will say to him, 'She never loved but you: she gives you all that is left of her, her child. She only prays you not to give him a bad mother.'"

Poor soul! this was her one bit of little, gentle jealousy; but it made her eyes stream. She would have put out her hand from the tomb to keep her boy's father single all his life.

"Oh! my Josephine, my darling sister," cried Rose, "why do you speak of death? Do you meditate a crime?"

"No; but it was on my heart to say it: it has done me good."

"At least, take me to your bosom, my well-beloved, that I may not *see* your tears."

"There — tears? No, you have lightened my heart. Bless you! bless you!"

The sisters twined their bosoms together in a long, gentle embrace. You might have taken them for two angels that flowed together in one love, but for their tears.

A deep voice was now heard in the sitting-room.

Josephine and Rose postponed the inevitable one moment more, by arranging their hair in the glass: then they opened the door, and entered the tapestried room.

Raynal was sitting on the sofa, the baroness's hand in his. Edouard was not there.

Colonel Raynal had given him a strange look, and said, "What, you here?" in a tone of voice that was intolerable.

Raynal came to meet the sisters. He saluted Josephine on the brow.

"You are pale, wife: and how cold her hand is."

"She has been ill this month past," said Rose interposing.

"You look ill, too, Mademoiselle Rose."

"Never mind," cried the baroness joyously, "you will revive them both."

Raynal made no reply to that.

"How long do you stay this time, a day?"

"A month, mother."

The doctor now joined the party, and friendly greetings passed between him and Raynal.

But ere long somehow all became conscious this was not a joyful meeting. The baroness could not alone sustain the spirits of the party, and soon even she began to notice that Raynal's replies were short, and that his manner was distrait and gloomy. The sisters saw this too, and trembled for what might be coming.

At last Raynal said bluntly, "Josephine, I want to speak to you alone."

The baroness gave the doctor a look, and made an excuse for going down-stairs to her own room. As she was going Josephine went to her and said calmly, —

"Mother, you have not kissed me to-day."

"There! Bless you, my darling!"

Raynal looked at Rose. She saw she must go, but she

lingered, and sought her sister's eye: it avoided her. At that Rose ran to the doctor, who was just going out of the door.

"Oh! doctor," she whispered trembling, "don't go beyond the door. I found her praying. My mind misgives me. She is going to tell him — or something worse."

"What do you mean?"

"I am afraid to say all I dread. She could not be so calm if she meant to live. Be near! as I shall. She has a phial hid in her bosom."

She left the old man trembling, and went back.

"Excuse me," said she to Raynal, "I only came to ask Josephine if she wants anything."

"No! — yes! — a glass of *eau sucrée*."

Rose mixed it for her. While doing this she noticed that Josephine shunned her eye, but Raynal gazed gently and with an air of pity on her.

She retired slowly into Josephine's bedroom, but did not quite close the door.

Raynal had something to say so painful that he shrank from plunging into it. He therefore, like many others, tried to creep into it, beginning with something else.

"Your health," said he, "alarms me. You seem sad, too. I don't understand that. You have no news from the Rhine, have you?"

"Monsieur!" said Josephine scared.

"Do not call me monsieur, nor look so frightened. Call me your friend. I am your sincere friend."

"Oh, yes; you always were."

"Thank you. You will give me a dearer title before we part this time."

"Yes," said Josephine in a low whisper, and shuddered.

"Have you forgiven me frightening you so that night?"

"Yes."

"It was a shock to me, too, I can tell you. I like the boy. She professed to love him, and, to own the truth, I loathe all treachery and deceit. If I had done a murder, I would own it. A lie doubles every crime. But I took heart; we are all selfish, we men; of the two sisters one was all innocence and good faith; and she was the one I had chosen."

At these words Josephine rose, like a statue moving, and took a phial from her bosom and poured the contents into the glass.

But ere she could drink it, if such was her intention, Raynal, with his eyes gloomily lowered, said, in a voice full of strange solemnity, —

"I went to the army of the Rhine."

Josephine put down the glass directly, though without removing her hand from it.

"I see you understand me, and approve. Yes, I saw that your sister would be dishonored, and I went to the army and saw her seducer."

"You saw *him*. Oh, I hope you did not go and speak to him of — of this?"

"Why, of course I did."

Josephine resolved to know the worst at once. "May I ask," said she, "what you told him?"

"Why, I told him all I had discovered, and pointed out the course he must take; he must marry your sister at once. He refused. I challenged him. But ere we met, I was ordered to lead a forlorn hope against a bastion. Then, seeing me go to certain death, the noble fellow pitied me. I mean this is how I understood it all at the time; at any rate, he promised to marry Rose if he should live."

Josephine put out her hand, and with a horrible smile said, "I thank you; you have saved the honor of our

family;" and with no more ado, she took the glass in her hand to drink the fatal contents.

But Raynal's reply arrested her hand. He said solemnly, "No, I have not. Have you no inkling of the terrible truth? Do not fiddle with that glass: drink it, or leave it alone; for, indeed, I need all your attention."

He took the glass out of her patient hand, and with a furtive look at the bedroom-door, drew her away to the other end of the room; "and," said he, "I could not tell your mother, for she knows nothing of the girl's folly; still less Rose, for I see she loves him still, or why is she so pale? Advise me, now, whilst we are alone. Colonel Dujardin was *comparatively* indifferent to *you*. Will you undertake the task? A rough soldier like me is not the person to break the terrible tidings to that poor girl."

"What tidings? You confuse, you perplex me. Oh! what does this horrible preparation mean?"

"It means he will never marry your sister; he will never see her more."

Then Raynal walked the room in great agitation, which at once communicated itself to his hearer. But the loving heart is ingenious in avoiding its dire misgivings.

"I see," said she; "he told you he would never visit Beaurepaire again. He was right."

Raynal shook his head sorrowfully.

"Ah, Josephine, you are far from the truth. I was to attack the bastion. It was mined by the enemy, and he knew it. He took advantage of my back being turned. He led his men out of the trenches; he assaulted the bastion at the head of his brigade. He took it."

"Ah, it was noble; it was like him."

"The enemy, retiring, blew the bastion into the air, and Dujardin — is dead."

"Dead!" said Josephine, in stupefied tones, as if the word conveyed no meaning to her mind, benumbed and stunned by the blow.

"Don't speak so loud," said Raynal; "I hear the poor girl at the door. Ay, he took my place, and is dead."

"Dead!"

"Swallowed up in smoke and flames, overwhelmed and crushed under the ruins."

Josephine's whole body gave way, and heaved like a tree falling under the axe. She sank slowly to her knees, and low moans of agony broke from her at intervals. "Dead, dead, dead!"

"Is it not terrible?" he cried.

She did not see him nor hear him, but moaned out wildly, "Dead, dead, dead!" The bedroom-door was opened.

She shrieked with sudden violence, "Dead! ah, pity! the glass! the composing draught." She stretched her hands out wildly. Raynal, with a face full of concern, ran to the table, and got the glass. She crawled on her knees to meet it; he brought it quickly to her hand.

"There, my poor soul!"

Even as their hands met, Rose threw herself on the cup, and snatched it with fury from them both. She was white as ashes, and her eyes, supernaturally large, glared on Raynal with terror. "Madman!" she cried, "would you kill her?"

He glared back on her: what did this mean? Their eyes were fixed on each other like combatants for life and death; they did not see that the room was filling with people, that the doctor was only on the other side of the table, and that the baroness and Edouard were at the door, and all looking wonderstruck at this strange sight — Josephine on her knees, and those two facing each other, white, with dilating eyes, the glass between them.

But what was that to the horror, when the next moment the patient Josephine started to her feet, and, standing in the midst, tore her hair by handfuls, out of her head.

"Ah, you snatch the kind poison from me!"

"Poison!"

"Poison!"

"Poison!" cried the others, horror-stricken.

"Ah! you won't let me die. Curse you all! curse you! I never had my own way in anything. I was always a slave and a fool. I have murdered the man I love — I love. Yes, my husband, do you hear? the man I love."

"Hush! daughter, respect my gray hairs."

"Your gray hairs! You are not so old in years as I am in agony. So this is your love, Rose! Ah, you won't let me die — won't you? THEN I'LL DO WORSE — I'LL TELL.

"He who is dead; you have murdered him amongst you, and I'll follow him in spite of you all — he was my betrothed. He struggled wounded, bleeding, to my feet. He found me married. News came of my husband's death; I married my betrothed."

"Married him!" exclaimed the baroness.

"Ah, my poor mother. And she kissed me so kindly just now — she will kiss me no more. Oh, I am not ashamed of marrying him. I am only ashamed of the cowardice that dared not do it in face of all the world. We had scarce been happy a fortnight, when a letter came from Colonel Raynal. He was alive. I drove my true husband away, wretch that I was. None but bad women have an atom of sense. I tried to do my duty to my legal husband. He was my benefactor. I thought it was my duty. Was it? I don't know: I have lost the sense of right and wrong. I turned from a living

creature to a lie. He who had scattered benefits on me and all this house; he whom it was too little to love; he ought to have been adored: this man came here one night to wife proud, joyous, and warm-hearted. He found a cradle, and two women watching it. Now Edouard, now *monsieur*, do you see that life is *impossible* to me? One bravely accused herself: she was innocent. One swooned away like a guilty coward."

Edouard uttered an exclamation.

"Yes, Edouard, you shall not be miserable like me; she was guilty. You do not understand me yet, my poor mother — and she was so happy this morning — *I* was the liar, the coward, the double-faced wife, the miserable mother that denied her child. Now will you let me die? Now do you see that I can't and won't live upon shame and despair? Ah, Monsieur Raynal, my dear friend, you were always generous: you will pity and kill me. I have dishonored the name you gave me to keep: I am neither Beaurepaire nor Raynal. Do pray kill me, monsieur — Jean, do pray release me from my life!"

And she crawled to his knees and embraced them, and kissed his hand, and pleaded more piteously for death, than others have begged for life.

Raynal stood like a rock: he was pale, and drew his breath audibly, but not a word. Then came a sight scarce less terrible than Josephine's despair. The baroness, looking and moving twenty years older than an hour before, tottered across the room to Raynal.

"Sir, you whom I have called my son, but whom I will never presume so to call again, I thought I had lived long enough never to have to blush again. I loved you, monsieur. I prayed every day for you. But she who *was* my daughter was not of my mind. Monsieur, I have never knelt but to God and to my king, and I kneel to you: forgive us, sir, forgive us!"

She tried to go down on her knees. He raised her with his strong arm, but he could not speak. She turned on the others.

"So this is the secret you were hiding from me! This secret has not killed you all. Oh! I shall not live under its shame so long as you have. Château of Beaurepaire — nest of treason, ingratitude, and immodesty — I loathe you as much as once I loved you. I will go and hide my head, and die elsewhere."

"Stay, madame!" said he, in a voice whose depth and dignity was such that it seemed impossible to disobey it. "It was sudden — I was shaken — but I am myself again."

"Oh, show some pity!" cried Rose.

"I shall try to be just."

There was a long, trembling silence; and during that silence and terrible agitation, one figure stood firm among those quaking, beating hearts, like a rock with the waves breaking round it — the MAN OF PRINCIPLE among the creatures of impulse.

He raised Josephine from her knees, and placed her all limp and powerless in an arm-chair. To her frenzy had now succeeded a sickness and feebleness like unto death.

"Widow Dujardin," said he, in a broken voice, "listen to me."

She moaned a sort of assent.

"Your mistake has been not trusting me. I was your friend, and not a selfish friend. I was not enough in love with you to destroy your happiness. Besides, I despise that sort of love. If you had told me all, I would have spared you this misery. By the present law, civil contracts of marriage can be dissolved by mutual consent."

At this the baroness uttered some sign of surprise.

"Ah!" continued Raynal, sadly, "you are aristocrats, and cannot keep pace with the times. This very day our mere contract shall be formally dissolved. Indeed, it ceases to exist since both parties are resolved to withdraw from it. So, if you married Dujardin in a church, you are Madame Dujardin at this moment, and his child is legitimate. What does she say?"

This question was to Rose, for what Josephine uttered sounded like a mere articulate moan. But Rose's quick ear had caught words, and she replied, all in tears, "My poor sister is blessing you, sir. We all bless you."

"She does not understand my position," said Raynal. He then walked up to Josephine, and leaning over her arm, and speaking rather loud, under the impression that her senses were blunted by grief, he said, "Look here: Colonel Dujardin, your husband, deliberately, and with his eyes open, sacrificed his life for me, and for his own heroic sense of honor. Now, it is my turn. If that hero stood here, and asked me for all the blood in my body, I would give it him. He is gone; but, dying for me, he has left me his widow and his child; they remain under my wing. To protect them is my pride, and my only consolation. I am going to the mayor to annul our unlucky contract in due form, and make us brother and sister instead. But," turning to the baroness, "don't you think to escape me as your daughter has done: no, no, old lady, once a mother, always a mother. Stir from your son's home if you dare!"

And with these words, in speaking which his voice had recovered its iron firmness, he strode out at the door, superb in manhood and principle, and every eye turned with wonder and admiration after him. Even when he was gone they gazed at the door by which a creature so strangely noble had disappeared.

The baroness was about to follow him without taking

any notice of Josephine. But Rose caught her by the gown. "O mother, speak to poor Josephine: bid her live."

The baroness only made a gesture of horror and disgust, and turned her back on them both.

Josephine, who had tottered up from her seat at Rose's words, sank heavily down again, and murmured, "Ah! the grave holds all that love me now."

Rose ran to her side. "Cruel Josephine! what, do not I love you? Mother, will you not help me persuade her to live? Oh! if she dies, I will die too; you will kill both your children."

Stern and indignant as the baroness was, yet these words pierced her heart. She turned with a piteous, half apologetic air to Edouard and Aubertin. "Gentlemen," said she, "she has been foolish, not guilty. Heaven pardons the best of us. Surely a mother may forgive her child." And with this nature conquered utterly; and she held out her arms, wide, wide, as is a mother's heart. Her two erring children rushed sobbing violently into them; and there was not a dry eye in the room for a long time.

After this, Josephine's heart almost ceased to beat. Fear and misgivings, and the heavy sense of deceit gnawing an honorable heart, were gone. Grief reigned alone in the pale, listless, bereaved widow.

The marriage was annulled before the mayor; and, three days afterwards, Raynal, by his influence, got the consummated marriage formally allowed in Paris.

With a delicacy for which one would hardly have given him credit, he never came near Beaurepaire till all this was settled; but he brought the document from Paris that made Josephine the widow Dujardin, and her boy the heir of Beaurepaire; and the moment she was really Madame Dujardin he avoided her no longer; and he became a comfort to her instead of a terror.

The dissolution of the marriage was a great tie between them. So much that, seeing how much she looked up to Raynal, the doctor said one day to the baroness, "If I know anything of human nature, they will marry again, provided none of you give her a hint which way her heart is turning."

They, who have habituated themselves to live for others, can suffer as well as do great things. Josephine kept alive. A passion such as hers, in a selfish nature, must have killed her.

Even as it was, she often said, "It is hard to live."

Then they used to talk to her of her boy. Would she leave him — Camille's boy — without a mother? And these words were never spoken to her quite in vain.

Her mother forgave her entirely, and loved her as before. Who could be angry with her long? The air was no longer heavy with lies. Wretched as she was, she breathed lighter. Joy and hope were gone. Sorrowful peace was coming. When the heart comes to this, nothing but Time can cure; but what will not Time do? What wounds have I seen him heal! His cures are incredible.

The little party sat one day, peaceful, but silent and sad, in the Pleasaunce, under the great oak.

Two soldiers came to the gate. They walked feebly, for one was lame, and leaned upon the other, who was pale and weak, and leaned upon a stick.

"Soldiers," said Raynal, "and invalided."

"Give them food and wine," said Josephine.

Rose went towards them; but she had scarcely taken three steps ere she cried out, —

"It is Dard! it is poor Dard! Come in, Dard, come in."

Dard limped towards them, leaning upon Sergeant La

Croix. A bit of Dard's heel had been shot away, and of La Croix's head.

Rose ran to the kitchen.

"Jacintha, bring out a table into the Pleasaunce, and something for two guests to eat."

The soldiers came slowly to the Pleasaunce, and were welcomed, and invited to sit down, and received with respect; for France even in that day honored the humblest of her brave.

Soon Jacintha came out with a little round table in her hands, and affected a composure which was belied by her shaking hands and her glowing cheek.

After a few words of homely welcome — not eloquent, but very sincere — she went off again with her apron to her eyes. She reappeared with the good cheer, and served the poor fellows with radiant zeal.

"What regiment?" asked Raynal.

Dard was about to answer, but his superior stopped him severely; then, rising with his hand to his forehead, he replied, with pride, "Twenty-fourth brigade, second company. We were cut up at Philipsburg, and incorporated with the 12th."

Raynal instantly regretted his question; for Josephine's eye fixed on Sergeant La Croix with an expression words cannot paint. Yet she showed more composure, real or forced, than he expected.

"Heaven sends him," said she. "My friend, tell me, were you — ah!"

Colonel Raynal interfered hastily. "Think what you do. He can tell you nothing but what we know, not so much, in fact, as we know; for, now I look at him, I think this is the very sergeant we found lying insensible under the bastion. He must have been struck before the bastion was taken even."

"I was, colonel, I was. I remember nothing but

losing my senses, and feeling the colors go out of my hand."

"There, you see, he knows nothing," said Raynal.

"It was hot work, colonel, under that bastion, but it was hotter to the poor fellows that got in. I heard all about it from Private Dard here."

"So, then, it was you who carried the colors?"

"Yes, I was struck down with the colors of the brigade in my hand," cried La Croix.

"See how people blunder about everything; they told me the colonel carried the colors."

"Why, of course he did. You don't think our colonel, the fighting colonel, would let me hold the colors of the brigade so long as he was alive. No; he was struck by a Prussian bullet, and he had just time to hand the colors to me, and point with his sword to the bastion, and down he went. It was hot work, I can tell you. I did not hold them long, not thirty seconds, and if we could know their history, they passed through more hands than that before they got to the Prussian flag-staff."

Raynal suddenly rose, and walked rapidly to and fro, with his hands behind him.

"Poor colonel!" continued La Croix. "Well, I love to think he died like a soldier, and not like some of my poor comrades, hashed to atoms, and not a volley fired over him. I hope they put a stone over him, for he was the best soldier and the best general in the army."

"O sir!" cried Josephine, "there is no stone even to mark the spot where he fell," and she sobbed despairingly.

"Why, how is this, Private Dard?" inquired La Croix, sternly.

Dard apologized for his comrade, and touching his own head significantly told them that since his wound the sergeant's memory was defective.

"Now, sergeant, didn't I tell you the colonel must

have got the better of his wound, and got into the battery?"

"It's false, Private Dard; don't I know our colonel better than that? Would ever he have let those colors out of his hand, if there had been an ounce of life left in him?"

"He died at the foot of the battery, I tell you."

"Then why didn't we find him?"

Here Jacintha put in a word with the quiet subdued meaning of her class. "I can't find that anybody ever saw the colonel dead."

"They did not find him, because they did not look for him," said Sergeant La Croix.

"God forgive you, sergeant!" said Dard, with some feeling. "Not look for *our colonel!* We turned over every body that lay there, — full thirty there were, — and you were one of them."

"Only thirty! Why, we settled more Prussians than that, I'll swear."

"Oh! they carried off their dead."

"Ay! but I don't see why they should carry our colonel off. His epaulets was all the thieves could do any good with. Stop! yet I do, Private Dard; I have a horrible suspicion. No, I have not; it is a certainty. What! don't you see, ye ninny? Thunder and thousands of devils, here's a disgrace. Dogs of Prussians! they have got our colonel, they have taken him prisoner."

"O God bless them!" cried Josephine; "O God bless the mouth that tells me so! O sir, I am his wife, his poor heart-broken wife. You would not be so cruel as to mock my despair. Say again that he may be alive, pray, say it again!"

"His wife! Private Dard, why didn't you tell me? You tell me nothing. Yes, my pretty lady, I'll say it again, and I'll prove it. Here is an enemy in full retreat,

would they encumber themselves with the colonel? If he was dead, they'd have whipped off his epaulets, and left him there. Alive? why not? Look at me: I am alive, and I was worse wounded than he was. They took me for dead, you see. Courage, madame! you will see him again, take an old soldier's word for it. Dard, attention! this is the colonel's wife."

She gazed on the speaker like one in a trance.

Every eye and every soul had been so bent on Sergeant La Croix that it was only now Raynal was observed to be missing. The next minute he came riding out of the stable-yard, and went full gallop down the road.

"Ah!" cried Rose, with a burst of hope; "he thinks so too; he has hopes. He is gone somewhere for information. Perhaps to Paris."

Josephine's excitement and alternations of hope and fear were now alarming. Rose held her hand, and implored her to try and be calm till they could see Raynal.

Just before dark he came riding fiercely home. Josephine flew down the stairs. Raynal at sight of her forgot all his caution. He waved his cocked hat in the air. She fell on her knees and thanked God. He gasped out, —

"Prisoner — exchanged for two Prussian lieutenants — sent home — they say he is in France!"

The tears of joy gushed in streams from her.

Some days passed in hope and joy inexpressible; but the good doctor was uneasy for Josephine. She was always listening with supernatural keenness and starting from her chair, and every fibre of her lovely person seemed to be on the quiver.

Nor was Rose without a serious misgiving. Would husband and wife ever meet? He evidently looked on her as Madame Raynal, and made it a point of honor to keep away from Beaurepaire.

They had recourse to that ever-soothing influence — her child. Madame Jouvenel was settled in the village, and Josephine visited her every day, and came back often with red eyes, but always soothed.

One day Rose and she went to Madame Jouvenel, and, entering the house without ceremony, found the nurse out, and no one watching the child.

"How careless!" said Rose.

Josephine stopped eagerly to kiss him. But instead of kissing him, she uttered a loud cry. There was a locket hanging round his neck.

It was a locket containing some of Josephine's hair and Camille's. She had given it him in the happy days that followed their marriage. She stood gasping in the middle of the room. Madame Jouvenel came running in soon after. Josephine, by a wonderful effort over herself, asked her calmly and cunningly, —

"Where is the gentleman who put this locket round my child's neck? I want to speak with him."

Madame Jouvenel stammered and looked confused.

"A soldier — an officer? — come, tell me!"

"Woman," cried Rose, "why do you hesitate?"

"What am I to do?" said Madame Jouvenel. "He made me swear never to mention his coming here. He goes away, or hides whenever you come. And since Madame does not love the poor wounded gentleman, what can he do better?"

"Not love him!" cried Rose: "why, she is his wife, his lawful wedded wife; he is a fool or a monster to run away for her. She loves him as no woman ever loved before. She pines for him. She dies for him."

The door of a little back room opened at these words of Rose, and there stood Camille, with his arm in a sling, pale and astounded, but great joy and wonder working in his face.

Josephine gave a cry of love that made the other two women weep, and in a moment they were sobbing for joy upon each other's neck.

Away went sorrow, doubt, despair, and all they had suffered. That one moment paid for all. And in that moment of joy and surprise, so great as to be almost terrible, perhaps it was well for Josephine that Camille, weakened by his wound, was quite overcome, and nearly fainted. She was herself just going into hysterics; but, seeing him quite overcome, she conquered them directly, and nursed, and soothed, and pitied, and encouraged him instead.

Then they sat hand in hand. Their happiness stopped their very breath. They could not speak. So Rose told him all. He never owned why he had slipped away when he saw them coming. He forgot it. He forgot all his hard thoughts of her. They took him home in the carriage. His wife would not let him out of her sight. For years and years after this she could hardly bear to let him be an hour out of her sight.

The world is wide; there may be a man in it who can paint the sudden bliss that fell on these two much suffering hearts; but I am not that man; this is beyond me; it was not only heaven, but heaven after hell.

Leave we the indescribable and the unspeakable for a moment, and go to a lighter theme.

The day Rose's character was so unexpectedly cleared, Edouard had no opportunity of speaking to her, or a reconciliation would have taken place. As it was, he went home intensely happy. But he did not resume his visits to the château. When he came to think calmly over it, his vanity was cruelly mortified. She was innocent of the greater offence; but how insolently she had sacrificed him, his love, and his respect, to another's interest.

More generous thoughts prevailed by degrees. And one day that her pale face, her tears, and her remorse got the better of his offended pride, he determined to give her a good lecture that should drown her in penitent tears; and then end by forgiving her. For one thing he could not be happy till he had forgiven her.

She walked into the room with a calm, dignified, stately air, and before he could utter one word of his grave remonstrance, attacked him thus: "You wish to speak to me, sir. If it is to apologize to me, I will save your vanity the mortification. I forgive you."

"*You* forgive *me!*" cried Edouard furiously.

"No violence, if you please," said the lady with cold *hauteur*. "Let us be friends, as Josephine and Raynal are. We cannot be anything more to one another now. You have wounded me too deeply by your jealous, suspicious nature."

Edouard gasped for breath, and was so far out-generalled that he accepted the place of defendant. "Wasn't I to believe your own lips? Did not Colonel Raynal believe you?"

"Oh, that's excusable. He did not know me. But you were my lover; you ought to have seen I was forced to deceive poor Raynal. How dare you believe your eyes, much more your ears, against my truth, against my honor; and then to believe such nonsense?" Then, with a grand assumption of superior knowledge, says she, "You little simpleton, how could the child be mine when I wasn't married at all?"

At this reproach, Edouard first stared, then grinned. "I forgot that," said he.

"Yes, and you forgot the moon isn't made of green cheese. However, if I saw you very humble, and very penitent, I might, perhaps, really forgive you — in time."

"No, forgive me at once. I don't understand your

angelical, diabolical, incomprehensible sex: who on earth can? forgive me."

"Oh! oh! oh! oh!"

Lo! the tears that could not come at a remonstrance were flowing in a stream at his generosity.

"What is the matter now?" said he tenderly. She cried away, but at the same time explained, —

"What a f—f—foolish you must be not to see that it is I who am without excuse. You were my betrothed. It was to you I owed my duty; not my sister. I am a wicked, unhappy girl. How you must hate me!"

"I adore you. There, no more forgiving on either side. Let our only quarrel be who shall love the other best."

"Oh, I know how that will be," said the observant toad. "You will love me best till you have got me; and then I shall love you best; oh, ever so much."

However, the prospect of loving best did not seem disagreeable to her; for with this announcement she deposited her head on his shoulder, and in that attitude took a little walk with him up and down the Pleasaunce: sixty times; about eight miles.

These two were a happy pair. This wayward, but generous heart never forgot her offence, and his forgiveness. She gave herself to him heart and soul, at the altar, and well she redeemed her vow. He rose high in political life: and paid the penalty of that sort of ambition; his heart was often sore. But by his own hearth sat comfort and ever ready sympathy. Ay, and patient industry to read blue-books, and a ready hand and brain to write diplomatic notes for him, off which the mind glided as from a ball of ice.

In thirty years she never once mentioned the servants to him.

"Oh, let eternal honor crown her name!"

It was only a little bit of heel that Dard had left in Prussia. More fortunate than his predecessor (Achilles), he got off with a slight but enduring limp. And so the army lost him.

He married Jacintha, and Josephine set them up in Bigot's (deceased) *auberge*. Jacintha shone as a landlady, and custom flowed in. For all that, a hankering after Beaurepaire was observable in her. Her favorite stroll was into the Beaurepaire kitchen, and on all fêtes and grand occasions she was prominent in gay attire as a retainer of the house. The last specimen of her homely sagacity I shall have the honor to lay before you is a critique upon her husband, which she vented six years after marriage.

"My Dard," said she, "is very good as far as he goes. What he has felt himself, that he can feel *for:* nobody better. You come to him with an empty belly, or a broken head, or all bleeding with a cut, or black and blue, and you shall find a friend. But if it is a sore heart, or trouble, and sorrow, and no hole in your carcass to show for it, you had better come to *me;* for you might as well tell your grief to a stone wall as to my man."

The baroness took her son Raynal to Paris, and there, with keen eye, selected him a wife. She proved an excellent one. It would have been hard if she had not, for the baroness with the severe sagacity of her age and sex, had set aside as naught a score of seeming angels, before she could suit herself with a daughter-in-law. At first the Raynals very properly saw little of the Dujardins; but when both had been married some years, the recollection of that fleeting and nominal connection waxed faint, while the memory of great benefits conferred on both sides remained lively as ever in hearts so great, and

there was a warm, a sacred friendship between the two houses — a friendship of the ancient Greeks, not of the modern club-house.

Camille and Josephine were blessed almost beyond the lot of humanity: none can really appreciate sunshine but those who come out of the cold dark. And so with happiness. For years they could hardly be said to live like mortals: they basked in bliss. But it was a near thing; for they but just scraped clear of life-long misery, and death's cold touch grazed them both as they went.

Yet they had heroic virtues to balance White Lies in the great Judge's eye.

A wholesome lesson, therefore, and a warning may be gathered from this story: and I know many novelists who would have preached that lesson at some length in every other chapter, and interrupted the sacred narrative to do it. But when I read stories so mutilated, I think of a circumstance related by Mr. Joseph Miller.

"An Englishman sojourning in some part of Scotland was afflicted with many hairs in the butter, and remonstrated. He was told, in reply, that the hairs and the butter came from one source — the cow; and that the just and natural proportions hitherto observed, could not be deranged, and bald butter invented — for *one*. 'So be it,' said the Englishman; 'but let me have the butter in one plate, and the hairs in another.'"

Acting on this hint, I have reserved some admirable remarks, reflections, discourses, and tirades, until the story should be ended, and the other plate be ready for the subsidiary sermon.

And now that the proper time is come, that love of intruding one's own wisdom in one's own person on the reader, which has marred so many works of art, is in my case restrained — first, by pure fatigue; secondly, because the moral of this particular story stands out so clear in

the narrative, that he who runs may read it without any sermon at all.

Those who will not take the trouble to gather my moral from the living tree, would not lift it out of my dead basket: would not unlock their jaw-bones to bite it, were I to thrust it into their very mouths.

This book is due at the LOUIS R. WILSON LIBRARY on the last date stamped under "Date Due." If not on hold it may be renewed by bringing it to the library.

DATE DUE	RET.	DATE DUE	RET.
JUN 18 2012			

Form No. 513